

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENGLISH EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
SATIRISTS ON G. CH. LICHTENBERG AND
THE NACHTWACHEN. VON BONAVENTURA

BY

A. J. DIETLINDE KATRITZKY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vii
INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM AND PROPOSAL.....	1
CHAPTERS	
I. GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG: HIS LIBRARY AND READING.....	18
II. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616) IN AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT.....	58
III. WILLIAM HOGARTH (1697-1764) AND VISUAL CONCEPTION IN THE <u>NIGHTWATCHES</u>	94
IV. ROBERT BURTON (1577-1640) AND THE SATIRIC TRADITION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY...	128
V. JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745) AND THE SATIRIC TECHNIQUES OF LICHTENBERG AND BONAVENTURA.....	162
VI. ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744) AND THE SCRIBLERIANS.....	210
VII. THE NINTH NIGHTWATCH. A DIGRESSION ON MADNESS, A DUNCIAD, AND A SATIRE ON THE SOCRATIC DIALOGUE..	246
VIII. HENRY FIELDING (1707-54) DOUBLE VISION AND MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES.	283
IX. LAURENCE STERNE (1713-68) AND KREUZGANG'S LIFE AND OPINIONS.....	326
CONCLUSION.....	373
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	384
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	397

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In 1804 the Nachtwachen. Von Bonaventura was published anonymously in Germany. Hardly noticed at first, the slender volume has attracted increasing acclaim and critical attention. Uneasily assigned to the romantic period, it was attributed to a large number of possible, and often mutually incompatible authors alive and active in 1804.

Striking parallels exist, however, between Bonaventura and G. Ch. Lichtenberg's variously and extensively documented thought processes. If attributed to Lichtenberg (1742-99), and analysed from the viewpoint of his literary values and habits, the penumbral world of the Nachtwachen is illuminated by the enlightened concerns of the eighteenth century, and in turn reflects German and English intellectual life and development during that period.

Lichtenberg was an active participator and catalyst in this important cultural interchange, and his appreciation of contemporary English literature was based on a thorough knowledge of the English tradition. In this study I attempt to demonstrate that Bonaventura shared this background.

Comparison with the English eighteenth-century satirists shows that the Nachtwachen are a menippea, a sub-species of the satire, which evolved in antiquity from the Socratic tradition. While satire is mainly concerned with criticism of present conditions, menippean satire refrains from attacking singular events or particular situations, and questions basic problems. It deals with life in the universal sense, its proper conduct, purpose and ultimate eschatological consequences. The menippea can therefore be defined as serio-comic summary of mankind's philosophical achievement, and as such was particularly congenial to the Age of Enlightenment.

To reflect the human condition in its entirety, the menippea incorporates extremes which range in style from formal rhetoric to vulgarisms, and in subject matter from the absurd and distorted to the sublime, and Lichtenberg, a leading German anglophile and the most accomplished satirist of his time,

perfected his skills by studying English models, especially Swift, Pope, Fielding, and Sterne.

The primary aim of viewing the Nachtwachen through his perspective is not to establish the true identity of Bonaventura, but to arrive at a valid interpretation of his intricate, multi-meaningful, and exceedingly condensed text, and its significance in the context of the late eighteenth century.

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM AND PROPOSAL.

One of the most controversial books in German literature are the Nachtwachen. Von Bonaventura. This work appeared anonymously in 1804 in the publishing house of Ferdinand Dienemann in Penig, Saxony, a firm which specialized in novels, mainly of a trivial and ephemeral nature.¹ Established in 1802, the business went already bankrupt in 1806 during the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars, when all its stock and documents were dispersed and lost.

Initially the Nightwatches was hardly noticed. The only documented contemporary reaction is a letter by the novelist Jean Paul (1763-1825).² He suggests that Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1775-1854) must be

¹ Nachtwachen. Von Bonaventura is the original title. As it is ambiguous, many different versions are in use. Unless these are quoted, I refer to the work as Nightwatches, because the page numbers given in this study are taken from the English version in Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura: The Night Watches of Bonaventura. Edinburgh Bilingual Library. Transl. and intr. Gerald Gillespie (Austin: University of Texas Press), 1971.

² Letter by Jean Paul to Paul Thierot, dated January 14, 1805. Cited by Wolfgang Paulsen, ed., Bonaventura. Nachtwachen (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984), pp. 162-63.

hiding behind the pseudonym Bonaventura, because Schelling had used it previously to publish a poem in the Athenäum. Jean Paul also draws attention to Bonaventura's indebtedness to his own style and manner.

The assumed authorship of Schelling remained unchallenged until 1903, when the critic Wilhelm Dilthey declared that it was not possible for Schelling to have written the book.³ Since then scholars have proposed many names without resolving the controversy for long. Among the most famous of these are E.T.A. Hoffmann, Clemens Brentano, and recently Jean Paul himself. Many minor and even obscure literary figures were also seriously considered.⁴

³ Paulsen, p. 165.

⁴ The following works refer particularly to these authors: Rudolf Haym, Die Romantische Schule. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1870). A footnote calls the Nightwatches without doubt one of the most ingenious productions of Romanticism (p. 636). Haym connects E. T. A. Hoffmann for the first time with Bonaventura, but finds influences of Jean Paul, too, who is now also suggested by Andreas Mielke, Zeitgenosse Bonaventura (Diss., Yale University, 1981). Erich Frank proposed Brentano as author and published the book as: Clemens Brentano: Nachtwachen von Bonaventura. Ed. and intr. Erich Frank (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1912). E. T. A. Hoffmann has again been proposed by Rosemarie Hunter-Lougheed, Die Nachtwachen von Bonaventura: e. Frühwerk E.T.A. Hoffmanns? (Heidelberg: Winter, 1985). This work contains an up-dated and extensive survey of the publishing

First of these was Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, the daughter of the Göttingen Professor of Oriental Languages, Johann David Michaelis (1717-91). Hermann Michel proposed her in 1904 as co-authoress with her husband.⁵ In Schelling's persistent silence regarding the authorship, Michel saw an overriding desire to avoid any further embarrassment after the controversies in which marriage with the divorced wife of August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845) had embroiled him. This judgement was partly based on the vehement and controversial opinions to which the nightwatchman gives voice, but more so on his unsqueamish references to illicit love and body functions.

Among other candidates Friedrich Gottlob Wetzel (1779-1819) was promoted because he wrote a poem in which he related mind and stomach in ways similar to

history of the Nightwatches and of most of the assumed authors in Chapter I, 1: "Rezeptions- und Forschungsgeschichte", pp. 13-45. Among recent summaries: Gerhart Hoffmeister. "Bonaventura: Nachtwachen (1804/05)." Romane und Erzählungen der deutschen Romantik: Neue Interpretationen (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), pp. 194-212; Jeffrey L. Sammons, "In Search of Bonaventura: The Nachtwachen Riddle 1965-1985." The Germanic Review, LXI, 2, 1986, pp. 50-56; Ruth Haag. "Noch einmal: Der Verfasser der Nachtwachen von Bonaventura". Euphorion, LXXXI, 3, 1987, pp. 286-97.

⁵ Nachtwachen von Bonaventura. Intr. Hermann Michel. Deutsche Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. Vol. 133 (Berlin: Behrs, 1904; rpt. Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1968).

Bonaventura.⁶ Owing to his general obscurity his claims were hard to disprove. They were only seriously challenged when Jost Schillemeit proposed Ernst August Friedrich Klingemann (1777-1831), an able dramatic producer, but a writer of limited talents.⁷ The hypothesis raised many doubts, but stimulated a wave of renewed interest in the elusive Bonaventura. Independently Horst Fleig had also arrived at the conclusion that Klingemann and Bonaventura were identical.⁸

The mere fact that a reasonable and, at least in part, convincing case can be made for each of these "authors" as well as for many others, testifies to the unusual depth and diversity of this extraordinary book, and confirms the claim of its protagonist to be a representative of mankind (" . . . me, who am called man," p. 167). This diversity is further revealed by the incompatible and divergent ways in which literary

⁶ Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura. Ed. and postscr. Franz Schulz (Leipzig: Insel, 1909), pp. 154-59.

⁷ Jost Schillemeit, Bonaventura. Der Verfasser der "Nachtwachen" (München: Beck, 1973).

⁸ Horst Fleig, Zersprungene Identität. Klingemann-Nachtwachen von Bonaventura (Tübingen: Rohmanuskript Promotion, 1974), and Literarischer Vampirismus: Klingemanns 'Nachtwachen von Bonaventura'. Studien zur deutschen Literatur, Vol. 83 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985).

critics tend to view the slender volume. The Nightwatches has been interpreted as a trivial novel, as the autobiographical revelations of a failed poet, and as a dazzling work of genius compared to which the Faust of Goethe and Byron pales.⁹

The assignation to trivial literature accords with the profile of the Dienemann publishing house, but hardly with the nature of the work. It is characterized by frequent shifts in style, mood and time, digressions which are thematically but not structurally integrated, satirical ambiguities and difficult philosophical allusions. All these stand in opposition to the generic requirements of the trivial novel, which call for clear and consecutive narration, a conventional and predictable plot, undemanding vocabulary, uncontroversial opinions and a satisfying conclusion.

Most critics have balanced their assessment of the book. They acknowledge flashes of brilliance, but pronounce the whole uneven, capricious and rather

⁹ Franz Heiduk, "Bonaventuras 'Nachtwachen'. Erste Bemerkungen zum Ort der Handlung und zur Frage nach dem Verfasser." Aurora. Jahrbuch der Eichendorff-Gesellschaft, XXXXI, (1982), pp. 143-165. This highly favorable opinion was given by Ernst von Lasaulx in a letter to Joseph Görres of March 28, 1831. Often quoted, e.g. Hunter Loughheed, p. 20.

reckless.¹⁰ From such judgements grew the conviction that the book must have been written by a person of great promise in his unrestrained youth.

Further problems are presented by the genre. The Nightwatches has been reluctantly classified as a novel.¹¹ Jeffrey Sammons, however, drew attention to the work's structure, which is so sophisticated that it escapes the notice of the reader whose expectations are conditioned by conventional novels. Sammons discovered five interconnected narrative cycles within the framework of the Sixteen Nightwatches in which the nightwatchman Kreuzgang relates his thoughts and adventures.¹² These unconventional numbers led Rita Terras to interpret the structure of the Nightwatches as a homage to

¹⁰ Jean Paul's judgement initiated this approach. It was followed by Karl August Ludwig Varnhagen von Ense who wrote into his diary on August 17th, 1843 that he had read the novel by Schelling. His criticism was strongly tinged by his antagonism to the presumed author. He found the book "immature, arbitrary, unorganic, also talented, glittering and full of promise, and no lack of cheek. Altogether, however, an incredibly weak production and too insignificant for Schelling." (Quotations from German sources are translated by Linde Katritzky, unless otherwise stated). Varnhagen's letter is quoted in most of the secondary literature on Bonaventura, e.g. Hunter-Loughheed, p. 23.

¹¹ Paulsen, p. 180: "Whoever was Bonaventura, he must have been a young man . . .", pp. 172-73.

¹² Jeffrey L. Sammons, The Nachtwachen von Bonaventura. A Structural Interpretation (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965).

Juvenal, whose sixteen satires are divided into five books.¹³ The implications of her ingenious inference were never seriously pursued, mainly because the Nightwatches has always been judged within the context of German Romanticism which did not favor satire as a genre. The nightwatchman himself, however, uses the word "satire" and its derivatives repeatedly, and calls himself at the beginning of his first round a "satirical Stentor" (p. 31). The metonymic use of the Homeric hero, whose voice equalled that of fifty others, emphatically and unequivocally identifies Kreuzgang as a satirist, but is atypical for a German romantic protagonist.

Nevertheless, valid reasons exist for an allocation of the work to the romantic period apart from the date of publication. Many of the concerns in the Nightwatches are identical with romantic themes or at least close to them. Comparison with English satirists will show, however, that these romantic leitmotifs could derive from the tradition of menippean satire as well. The book contains references to Dr. Erasmus Darwin and the London clockmaker Samuel Day on both of whom articles

¹³ Rita Terras, "Juvenal und die satirische Struktur der 'Nachtwachen von Bonaventura'." German Quarterly, LII, (1979), pp. 18-31.

appeared in Germany in 1804.¹⁴ Consequently it was taken for granted that the work could not have been written prior to these publications, and that Bonaventura must be an author active during 1804.

This thesis attempts to demonstrate:

1) that the Nightwatches are a menippean satire written in the tradition of eighteenth-century British literature, particularly that of Swift, but softened by the feeling which Addison, Johnson, and especially Fielding added to the genre, and by the sentiment contributed by Sterne;

¹⁴ The journal Der Freimüthige carried a supplement on "English Literature" on March 2nd, 1804, which contained information about Erasmus Darwin's The Temple of Nature. Though Darwin's Temple of Nature appeared posthumously in 1803, the two aspects of it which are used in the Nightwatches were favorite ideas of Dr. Darwin and are mentioned in both his previous major works, The Botanic Garden (1789) and Zoonomia (1794-96), see Linde Katritzky, "Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, F.R.S." Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, XXXIX, Nr. 1, 1984, pp.41-49. Another supplement which also appeared at the beginning of March described the night clock by Samuel Day, to which a footnote in the Nightwatches refers at the end of the Sixth Nightwatch, see Schillemeit, p. 72. An anonymous article about the same clock is also in the Magazin aller neuen Erfindungen, Entdeckungen und Verbesserungen, IV (Leipzig: Baumgärtnerische Buchhandlung, n.d.). Hermann Michel, p. xvi, assumes that the year of publication is 1804. For connections between Darwin and the Lunar Society with this clock see Adrien Burchall, "The Noctuary or Watchman's Clock: Its Introduction and Development." Antiquarian Horology. Proceedings of the Antiquarian Horological Society, XV, Nr. 3, 1985, pp. 231-51.

- 2) that the book is not the result of impetuous inspiration but designed with unusual complexity and profundity; it reveals exceptional erudition, and is grounded in wide reading which includes English literature and philosophy of the eighteenth century;
- 3) that the text accords with the opinions and the range of learning of the acknowledged master of German satire, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-99), one of the prominent representatives of the late Enlightenment and a leading German Anglophile.¹⁵

An assignment of the Nightwatches to the late Enlightenment should also lead to a better understanding of the interaction between the German classic and romantic literary movements, and strengthen the conclusions of Anglo-American literary criticism that the differences between these two epochs are not as distinct as has been traditionally maintained in German literary history.¹⁶ Proposing the Anglophile, enlightened thinker Lichtenberg as the probable author of the enigmatic Nightwatches

¹⁵ These chronological problems are discussed in Linde Katritzky, "Eine Untersuchung der Eigennamen in den *Nachtwachen* von Bonaventura und bei Georg Christoph Lichtenberg." Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts, Gainesville: University of Florida, 1984; pp. 38-49.

¹⁶ E.g. M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

should therefore imply that the literary habits and the scientific thinking of eighteenth-century England played a considerable part in the origins of German romanticism. It is hoped that this thesis may contribute toward clarifying some of these issues, though it will deal primarily with the relationship of the Nightwatches with English satirists of the eighteenth century.

As Bonaventura's text is woven from an unusual wealth of material, and infused with allusions and associations gathered from the entire range of European eighteenth-century experience, I cannot hope to deal with the full extent of the implications, ambiguities and coded references. I follow Northrop Frye in considering this exceptional richness and variety not as incidental embellishment, but as one of the generic characteristics of menippean satire. Frye describes this sub-genre as "a combination of fantasy and morality" and defines "creative treatment of exhaustive erudition" as its organizing principle. He sees Plato as "a strong influence on this type".¹⁷

¹⁷ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (1957; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 3rd. paperb. ed., pp. 310-11. It is worth noting that Plato's theories are quoted in the Nightwatches (p. 37). The thought is repeated without mention of Plato on pp. 123, 213.

In his Anatomy of Satire Gilbert Highet sees Bion Borysthene, a follower of the Socratic tradition, as the true originator of what became known as the Menippean satire, for he was the "first to dress philosophy in the flowery clothes of a prostitute." By this is meant that he was the first, or at least the first who is known, who explained important philosophical problems in the crude terms which could be readily understood even by the lowest and most illiterate. Bion, a freed slave who was born around 325 B.C., thus spread the achievements of Greek philosophy among the uneducated, who could profit from them though they were unable to deal with abstract concepts.¹⁸

This combination of profound thoughts with the free discussion of those aspects of life which are usually avoided in polite society became one of the distinguishing characteristics of the menippean. These were carefully categorised in a penetrating study of the genre by Mikhail Bakhtin.¹⁹ He

¹⁸ Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 31-32.

¹⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Ed. and transl. Caryl Emerson (1984; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986). Chap. IV, "Characteristics of Genre and Plot Composition in Dostoevsky's Works", p. 101-80, esp. p. 112-19. Bakhtin's work appeared first with the title Problems of Dostoevsky's Art, Leningrad, 1928. It was expanded

credits Bion Borysthenes with first mingling philosophy with "crude slum naturalism," (Problems, p. 115) and enumerates fourteen particular characteristics of the menippean satire, noting especially its free interplay of opposite features: fact and fantasy; the serious and the comic; philosophical universalism and trivialities; wisdom, absurdity and insanity. "All sorts of violations of the generally accepted and customary course of events and the established norms of behaviour and etiquette" are classified as part of the menippean concern to unmask the deceiving appearances of life and to get closer to ultimate truth (Problems, p. 117). "Sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations . . . abrupt transitions and . . . wide use of inserted genres: novellas, letters, oratorical speeches, symposia, and so on", widen the scope of the menippea to involve the full paradox of life (Problems, p. 118). Bakhtin calls the levels traditionally explored by the menippea: "Olympus, the nether world, and earth" (Problems, p. 133). Every part of the menippea serves as "moral experimentation" (Problems, p. 152), which is the connecting principle of the genre. The frequent flights into fantasy and the "creation of

for a second edition, Moscow, 1963, and did not become available to the West until twenty years later.

extraordinary situations" are therefore not subject to whim, but are carefully designed to serve "as a mode for searching after truth, provoking it, and, most important, testing it." Thus "the fantastic is subordinated to the purely ideational function," (Problems, p. 114) and the possibilities of human experience in every extreme are invoked in a quest for the essence and purpose of life. This search is also the motivation of Kreuzgang, Bonaventura's protagonist, and the organizing principle of his sixteen nightwatches.

In regard to this unlimited variety of subject matter Bahktin remarks that "while possessing an inner integrity, the genre of the menippea simultaneously possesses great external plasticity and a remarkable capacity to absorb into itself kindred small genres, and to penetrate as a component element into other large genres" (Problem, p. 119). This loosely connected narrative form is operative throughout the Nightwatches and was supposedly practised by the Greek cynic Menippus. His works have not survived, but among his followers were the Greek Lucian and the Roman Varro, and later Petronius and Apuleius. At first the genre used a mixture of prose and verse, and for this reason a French collection of political satires which appeared

anonymously in 1594 took the title Satire Ménippée, for it used a medley of styles and languages.

As the menippea brings together different elements which are taken from a large variety of other genres, it is not very stable and has no pure form. It "has baffled critics, and there is hardly any fiction writer deeply influenced by it who has not been accused of disorderly conduct."²⁰ Precisely this accusation, levelled against the early work of Dostoevsky, led Bakhtin to investigate Dostoevsky's poetics, to define the genre and to detect the pattern of intellectual purpose and structural organisation. His conclusions apply also in remarkable degree to the Nightwatches, a work which has likewise attracted a large share of criticism for nonconformity to the generic demands of the novel.²¹

Similarities between Dostoevsky's early work and the Nightwatches have already been noted by Rado Pribic in his study, Bonaventura's "Nachtwachen" and Dostoevsky's "Notes from the Underground." Pribic calls this: "A Comparison in Nihilism," and

²⁰ Frye, p. 313.

²¹ E.g. Jeffrey L. Sammons, "In Search of Bonaventura: The Nachtwachen Riddle 1965-85." The Germanic Review, LXI, Nr. 2, 1986, p. 50: ". . . failures of coherence not only indicate haste in composition but make me doubt that the book was written by a major author of the time."

interprets both the Nightwatches and the Notes from the Underground from this perspective. He gives a plausible explanation why Dostoevsky could have been familiar with the German work, of which many copies were left unsold in St. Petersburg, when Dienemann collapsed in 1806.²²

The author of the Nightwatches has deliberately structured his text as a menippea. Numerous references indicate intentional adherence to its standards. Comparison with English eighteenth-century satire shows that he followed the examples of Swift, Fielding, Sterne and others. The Nightwatches also reveals its author to be well acquainted with German thought. Echoes of Lessing's work are particularly noticeable, especially the "69. Stück" of the "Hamburgische Dramaturgie."²³

Conscious choice of genre is an eighteenth-century attitude and one of the conventions and restrictions which the Sturm und Drang in Germany tried to sweep away, and against which the romantic writers also revolted. It is therefore a

²² Rado Pribic, Bonaventura's "Nachtwachen" and Dostoevsky's "Notes from the Underground." A Comparison in Nihilism. Slavistische Beiträge, Vol. 79 (München: Otto Sagner, 1974), p. 10.

²³ Gotthold Ephraim Lessings sämtliche Schriften. Ed. Karl Lachmann (1894; rpt. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), Vol. 10, "Hamburgische Dramaturgie, '69. Stück'," pp. 76-80.

characteristic which sets the author of the Nightwatches apart from these literary movements. Nevertheless the romantic period was rich in menippean elements which, as Bakhtin notes, were especially prominent and influential in E.T.A. Hoffmann (Problems, p. 155). An investigation of the Nightwatches reveals the English contribution to this development, and shows that the paradox of the exceptional originality of this work, within a crowded reference system of constantly recalled literary works of outstanding merit, was achieved in accordance with Edward Young's prescript on how to imitate the masters properly: "Let us be as far from neglecting, as from copying, their admirable compositions."

This aspect of Young's conjectures on originality was brushed aside by the German enthusiasts who only followed Young in extolling the merits of genius. Bonaventura, however, as did Lichtenberg, also listened to Young's further advice: "It is by a sort of noble contagion, from a general familiarity with their writings, and not by any particular sordid theft, that we can be the better for those who went before us." Like Lichtenberg after him, Young also stressed the importance of imitating methods, which are of universal importance,

rather than works, which are relevant to conditions of the past. Thus he pointed out: "He that imitates the divine Iliad, does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method, which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great."²⁴

Bonaventura, like the German writers of the Storm and Stress, and of the romantic period, disdained imitation of previous texts, but unlike these contemporaries did not reject the past, but studied the methods and aims of outstanding previous writers in depth. This thesis traces the influence of the English eighteenth-century satirists on his text, and also attempts to demonstrate that Bonaventura, in taking their methods, also studied the sources of their inspiration.

²⁴ Edward Young, "Conjectures on Original Composition." Critical Theory since Plato. Ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), pp. 340-341.

CHAPTER I

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG: HIS LIBRARY AND READING.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, whose patterns of thought show striking parallels to those of Bonaventura, was born in 1742 in Ober-Ramstadt, a small town near Darmstadt. He was the seventeenth and last child of a Lutheran pastor who came from a family with a strong pietistic tradition. Such views were favored by the court in Darmstadt at the time and in 1750 Konrad Lichtenberg was therefore appointed Superintendent of Church affairs for the principality. He died, however, the following year, leaving his widow in straitened circumstances. From early youth his youngest son suffered from a spinal weakness which eventually dwarfed and crippled him. A natural liveliness and inclination to socialize notwithstanding, this handicap imposed on him the position of an outsider, and as such he developed and perfected his unusually keen gifts as an observer.

His talents were fostered at the Grammar School in Darmstadt. He left in 1761 with an excellent record, but had to wait until 1763 before he could

enter the university in Göttingen, for he was dependent on a stipend from his sovereign, which could only be obtained with difficulty.

How he spent the intervening years can be surmised from a letter he wrote to Johann Arnold Ebert (1723-95) in 1794. He calls him his teacher of thirty-three years ago and recalls the endless nocturnal hours he was then devoting to Young's Night Thoughts, a work which Ebert had vigorously promoted and translated several times.¹

Lichtenberg developed and maintained a close relationship with the man from whose work he had profited in his autodidactic efforts to acquire a knowledge of English and England. Ebert played a prominent part in the change of German cultural orientation from France to England at a time when French was still the leading foreign language in Germany. English literature was mainly known through French mediation, notably by Voltaire, whose Letters Philosophiques (1734) first aroused continental interest in English affairs, and by Diderot. Ebert was himself a minor poet, and John Louis Kind gives him much credit for subordinating his own creativity

¹ Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Schriften und Briefe, 5 vols. Ed. Wolfgang Promies. Vol. IV, Briefe (München: Hanser: 1967), p. 893, Letter to Johann Arnold Ebert, July 31, 1794.

to the promotion of English writers, especially Edward Young (1683-1765). While his own work received little notice, "all contemporary writers, commentators, and periodicals join in the universal acclamation and praise over the zeal, scholarship, and merit of the 'foremost and greatest English scholar and genius', the translator of the 'Night Thoughts'".

From 1751 onwards, Ebert published translations of the "Night Thoughts," as well as of Young's other works, and he revised them until the year before his death. Kind calls him "one of the ablest German translators of English writers in the eighteenth century." Ebert "devoted the best part of his life to the works of Young, learned English early and read all the foremost British authors in the original." While he ardently admired Young, he also saw his weaknesses, and the merits of Young's fellow-countrymen.²

Ebert had belonged to a group of young Leipzig students who had gathered round Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769), one of the leading literary figures of the German enlightenment. They became

² John Louis Kind, Edward Young in Germany (New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 82.

(Quotations are documented at the end of the relevant passage.)

interested in eighteenth-century English literature, which they originally studied in French translations, and they contributed to a journal inspired by Addison's example, the Neue Beyträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und des Witzes, usually called the Bremer Beyträge. The journal flourished from 1745-1748 and showed a strong interest in English literature, introducing, for instance, the works of Prior, Glover and Thomson to German readers. The contributors admired Pope and Swift, and adopted the organization of the Scriblerus Club. They met in a Leipzig coffee house and cooperated on unsigned articles.³ To this circle belonged also men of such distinction as Klopstock, Lessing and his cousin Christlob Mylius, the brothers Johann Elias and Johann Adolf Schlegel, and Gotthelf Abraham Kästner (1719-1800), first Lichtenberg's professor and then his colleague in Göttingen. Kästner was as celebrated for his satiric epigrams as for his brilliance in mathematics, and Lichtenberg's personal acquaintance with leading members of this group of distinguished Anglophiles, such as Lessing and Klopstock, appears to be due to Kästner.

³ Leonard Marsden Price, English Literature in Germany (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p. 59.

Ebert had originally planned to translate all the most important English works, but, starting with the first seven "Nights" of Young, he soon found his energies fully absorbed in the task "of translating, annotating, and expounding from his chair in Braunschweig the works of Young alone."⁴ Lichtenberg developed a specially close bond to this thorough scholar, and kept up a lifelong exchange of ideas with him.

The easy familiarity with English literature, which Lichtenberg had already acquired when he started his notebooks in 1764, prepared him perfectly for the life in Göttingen, to which he came as a student of mathematics and astronomy in 1763. With the exception of two visits to England and several minor excursions in Germany, he remained there for the rest of his life. The University of Göttingen had been founded 1734-37 by King George II, who was also the Elector of Hanover, and thus the new seat of learning was destined from the start to become a particularly active center of Anglo-German cultural exchange. The exceptionally liberal conditions which the absent ruler had created for his new institution attracted many of the brightest scholars, both as teachers and students. A constant influx of young

⁴ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 115.

Englishmen, eager to finish their education in their sovereign's foreign domain, ensured continuing contact with the latest intellectual developments in England.

Lichtenberg visited England for the first time in 1770 as a guest of Lord Boston, the influential father of one of his earliest students, and was introduced by him not only to the social and intellectual leaders of London society, among them Joseph Priestley, but also to the king himself. As a result of this meeting, Lichtenberg came to London again in 1774, this time the personal guest of King George III and Queen Charlotte in their royal palace at Kew.⁵

Lichtenberg freely shared his impressions from this journey in lively communications which were widely read already during his own lifetime, for even in an age in which letter writing had been perfected as an art he was acclaimed as a correspondent of outstanding wit and brilliance. He was always attuned to the status and concerns of his addressees, ranging from Marie Tietermann, housekeeper of the Osnabrück inn at which he stayed during 1772/73 while surveying

⁵ Hans Ludwig Gumbert, "Der 22. April 1770." Das Lichtenberg-Gespräch in Ober-Ramstadt 1977. Ed. Otto Weber (Ober-Ramstadt: Verein für Heimatgeschichte e.V., 1982), pp. 5-16.

the country in the service of the king, to leading scientists and high officials. His letters display not only his stylistic versatility, but also afford a particularly comprehensive overview of the concerns of his times, traits in which Bonaventura, too, displays particular competence. To keep abreast of current issues and affairs was one of Lichtenbergs foremost aims, for he followed his own advice "Bemühe dich, nicht unter deiner Zeit zu sein."⁶ His keen observations, deeply reflected experiences and penetrating opinions are also preserved in his writings on a large number of subjects, and in his voluminous private notes, started in 1764, which record his intellectual pursuits. All these give insight into one of the leading minds of the late enlightenment and into the interchange of ideas which shaped the epoch. The extent to which Lichtenberg contributed to the intellectual and scientific

⁶ Promies, Vol. I, p. 302, D 474.

Lichtenberg's posthumously published notes, his so-called aphorisms, are numbered according to the letters assigned by himself to his notebooks. The individual notes were given consecutive numbers by A. Leitzmann in 1902, who, however, omitted many of the notes which were considered of minor importance at the time, especially those with scientific content. Promies published the entire notes for the first time, and though he retained Leitzmann's system, he had to change the numbers. All quotations conform to his usage.

concerns of his age is only now revealed by recent editions of his entire works.⁷

Access to this material has resulted in a growing awareness of the importance and topical relevance of Lichtenberg's thoughts, which is also reflected in the publication of the contents of his library.⁸ Though their variety is impressive, the large number of books Lichtenberg owned at his death is by no means indicative of all his reading. Only Hesperus by Jean Paul (No. 1614) is listed, for instance, while notebook entries show that Lichtenberg knew and critically appraised all the works of this writer which appeared during his own life time (L 87, L 514, L 581, L 592, L 615).⁹

⁷ Besides the authoritative Promies ed. (1968-74) there is Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. Schriften und Briefe, 4 vols. Ed. Franz H. Mautner (Frankfurt: Insel, 1983); Briefwechsel. Ed. Ulrich Joost and Albrecht Schöne (München: C. H. Beck), Vol. I, 1983, Vol. II, 1985. The planned 5 vols. will bring together the 1650 letters still known to exist. (Previously 1215 of Lichtenberg's letters were printed in 65 different publications, Vol. I, p. XV).

The documents concerning the two visits to England are found in Lichtenberg in England. Dokumente einer Begegnung, 2 vols. Ed. Hans Ludwig Gumbert (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977).

⁸ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana. Katalog der Bibliothek Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs. Ed. and ann. Hans Ludwig Gumbert (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982). Nos. in the text follow Gumbert.

⁹ Lichtenberg's notebook entries are numbered in chronological order, the letters denoting his diaries. I quote according to Promies, Vols. I and II.

Much similar proof of Lichtenberg's critically astute and wide-ranging reading exists. Only a few selected examples, which throw special light on his interests and habits, can therefore be given in this preliminary survey, but more information from the Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana will be provided in following chapters. In view of the remarkable overlap with the concerns of Bonaventura, it is noteworthy that Lichtenberg kept his library up to date until shortly before his death on February 24th, 1799, in spite of his rapidly declining health. Investigation of the proper names in the Nightwatches has correspondingly shown that Bonaventura uses up-to-date information until 1798, with a particular concentration of remarks and allusions connected to scientific progress made during the last decade of the century.¹⁰

The four decisive centers of English influence on German letters during the eighteenth century were Hamburg, Zürich, Leipzig and Göttinge,¹¹ and Lichtenberg was personally involved with events in all of them. In Göttingen he was himself the leading

¹⁰ Katritzky, "Untersuchung der Eigennamen," pp. 32-76.

¹¹ Leonard Marsden Price, English>German Literary Influences (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1919), pp. 159-61.

Anglophile, and close to many of the intellectual leaders who emerged from the Leipzig circle, though he kept modestly quiet about his prestigious connections. Only one sentence in a letter of July 31st, 1794, relates Young's and Ebert's lasting impression on Lichtenberg's mind,¹² and a single, tantalizingly terse note witnesses to his only recorded meeting with Lessing, on March 8th, 1777: "Lessing called" (F 406).

Such glimpses have to be supplemented with information gleaned from other sources. In Lessing's case many remarks reveal a high regard, which shows itself also in efforts to find a befitting epitaph for a genius who was so greatly neglected and ill rewarded for his great contributions to German letters (J 239 and 313). Lichtenberg was well versed in Lessing's works and owned several, among them Ernst and Falk. Discussions for Freemasons (1778). On August 31st, 1778, he reported to Heinrich Christian Boie that he had read the manuscript of this treatise, which he called one of the best works he had seen in a long time, adding that if freemasons are the people described by Lessing it must be a sin

¹² Promies, Vol. IV, No. 665. An Johann Arnold Ebert, p. 893.

against human nature not to be counted among them.¹³

This positive view of freethinkers is shared by Bonaventura.¹⁴ The first three of the discussions between Ernst und Falk had been published by Johann Christian Dieterich (1722-1800), Lichtenberg's friend and landlord, whose connections with men of letters extended and reinforced Lichtenberg's own contacts. Two volumes of Lessing's Hamburgische Dramaturgie were also in Lichtenberg's library. In this major work of mediation between English and German culture "Part 69" is concerned with serio-comic writing and starts with a reminder of the strong Spanish influences on this genre. Lessing quotes here at length from the satiric New Art of Comedy Writing, in which Lope de Vega acknowledges classic sources for the intermingling of serious and ludicrous aspects, and arrives at the conclusion: "Nature itself teaches us this diversity, and in this her beauty partly originates."¹⁵

In the same article Lessing also pleads in favour of the Hanswurst, the clown banned from the German stage by the strict Johann Christoph Gottsched

¹³ Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, No. 521, p. 878.

¹⁴ Nightwatches, pp. 31-36.

¹⁵ Lessings sämtliche Schriften, Vol. X, "Hamburgische Dramaturgie, '69. Stück'," pp. 76-80.

(1700-1766) for disorderly behaviour and free use of unseemly language. Lessing suggests satirically that the antics of this popular character should be confined to the stage, and not in future be witnessed so frequently in real life. Stage metaphors--a recurring device in tragi-comedy--are used by Lessing in various ways in this article, as when he deplors that in plays as in life the most important roles are so often allocated to the worst actors. Correspondingly the Hanswurst in the Fourth Nightwatch "excuses the marionette director for having ordered things like our Lord God and entrusted the most important roles to the least talented actors" (p. 75). The "marionette play with Clown" (p. 73) contains also various other references to the theory of tragi-comic writing as explained by Lessing, whom Bonaventura singles out with Kant, Goethe and Schiller (pp. 179, 181).

This puppet interlude in the Fourth Nightwatch with its heroine Columbine, is also linked to Justus Möser (1720-94), with whom Lichtenberg was personally acquainted, and whose books he kept in his library.¹⁶ Chief justice of the criminal court in Hanover, privy councilor and councilor of justice, Möser was expert in various subjects, notably law and history. He was

¹⁶ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, Nos. 1164 and 1883.

also keenly interested in literature and literary criticism, which he regarded in accordance with the English Enlightenment as a means of educating the public. He wrote a treatise in defense of Harlequin in which he commented on the commedia dell'arte. To him this genre represented a world where the grotesque is part of a peculiar circle or microcosm to which Columbine and other traditional characters belong. Literary use of such standard characters he commended as a convenient shortcut and abbreviation, as their universally known traits obliterate the need for detailed exposition.¹⁷

Göttingen provided excellent opportunities to keep pace with intellectual developments in Germany and was the ideal place to contact those in England who, under George III, actively continued the liberal cultural policy of the founder. Lichtenberg had only a very meager stipend when he started his career in Göttingen, but his exceptional linguistic competence assured him the post of tutor to young English noblemen, and by this means he continued to supplement his income during most of his life. Many

¹⁷ Justus Möser, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. II. Ed. Oda May (Oldenburg: Gerhard Stalling, 1981). "Harlekin oder Verteidigung des Grotesk-Komischen" (1761), pp. 306-342. Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (1965; Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1968). Bakhtin comments on "Harekin's" influence on tragi-comic writing, pp. 35-36.

years later, when the younger royal princes were sent to study in Göttingen, Lichtenberg was appointed their tutor and they came to live in his house.¹⁸ Though a third visit to England never materialized, the constant influx of students and visitors from England enabled Lichtenberg to keep in close touch with the newest thoughts and developments there, and in 1793 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, with which he had already been in close contact since his first acquaintance with Priestley.

From 1765 onwards, Lichtenberg wrote his assorted thoughts into notebooks, for which he himself suggested the English word "wastebooks" (E 46). The expression is taken from the language of merchants and refers to a rough ledger into which everything is entered as it occurs, without the order which is imposed during a later draft. The term therefore indicates the intention to utilise these thoughts for further writing, and many were indeed used by him for this purpose in miscellaneous ways. When they were posthumously published, the editors

¹⁸ Mautner, Vol. IV, pp. 484-85, letter to Samuel Thomas Sömmering, June 2nd, 1786. Adolf Friedrich was in Göttingen 1786-1791, August Friedrich 1786-90, Ernst August 1786-1791.

added numbers to the notes, which became collectively known as aphorisms.¹⁹

Franz H. Mautner starts his discussion on the themes of the early notebooks with the statement: "The most frequent object of Lichtenberg's observations, of his thoughts and therefore also of his ideas is man".²⁰ As Mautner shows, Lichtenberg's notes mirror the tendency of his age to unite all intellectual disciplines into a "science of man," a task in which Lichtenberg himself was actively engaged. The attempt to work towards an "understanding of man in all levels of society" (F 37) constituted, indeed, the unifying idea behind the multifarious interests and investigations, to which Lichtenberg's work as professor of natural philosophy and astronomy inevitably led. Through his passion for knowledge and constant application "he became the leading German expert in a number of scientific fields, including geodesy, geophysics, meteorology, astronomy, chemistry, statistics, and geometry, in

¹⁹ The first edition aiming at some sort of comprehensiveness was undertaken by Albert Leitzmann, who chose the name Aphorismen, though only part of the notes belong to this genre which made Lichtenberg famous. Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs Aphorismen. Ed. Albert Leitzmann. Deutsche Literaturdenkmale (Berlin, 1902-08; rpt. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1968).

²⁰ Franz H. Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), p. 10.

addition to his foremost field and prime interest--experimental physics."²¹

Bonaventura combines these diverse interests in his metaphors and images, as in his whole outlook on life. The description of Don Juan "all in flames like a volcano, through whose millenary layers the inner fire all at once found its vent" (pp. 91 and 93), is but one of many examples, while signifying themes from natural history permeate the entire work, like the recurring references to Versteinerung--petrification, fossilization--or the persistent descriptions of thunder and lightning.²²

Lichtenberg's pioneering electrical experiments were famous. In 1780 he erected in Göttingen one of the first lightning conductors, and his innovations attracted the attention of Alessandro Volta (1745-1827), who visited him in 1784 and 1785. With the leading work of Benjamin Franklin (1706-90) in this field, Lichtenberg was, of course, familiar, but characteristically he did not restrict his interest

²¹ Dictionary of Scientific Biography, Vol. VIII (New York: Scribners, 1973).

²² The decisive importance of the understanding and demystification of thunderstorms is pointed out by Engelhard Weigl, "Entzauberung der Natur durch Wissenschaft--dargestellt am Beispiel der Erfindung des Blitzableiters," Jahrbuch der Jean-Paul-Gesellschaft, XXII, 1987, pp. 7-39. Lichtenberg's contribution is highlighted, esp. pp. 21-22.

in Franklin to the professional aspect alone. He reported to J. A. H. Reimarus in 1792 that whatever Franklin wrote was distinguished by bons sens, and that in his writing, be it on the constitution of a new nation or the cure of smoky chimneys, the guid was as instructive as the quomodo.²³ The epitaph which Franklin had composed for himself Lichtenberg copied down in English:

The body of/Benjamin Franklin, Printer/(like a cover of an old book/its contents worn out/and stript of its lettering and gilding)/ Lies here, food for the worms;/yet the work shall not be lost/For it shall (as he believed) appear once more, in a new and most beautiful Edition,/corrected and revised/by the author.

F 738

As Lichtenberg himself was actively involved in the publishing business of his friend Dieterich, metaphors taken from the printers' language had, as to Bonaventura, a special appeal for him, and like the author of the Nightwatches he was obsessed by thoughts about eternity. The entry D 372, for instance, states in one of the tantalizing compressions which often baffle commentators:

²³ Mautner, Schriften und Briefe, Vol. IV, p. 608. Lichtenberg refers to: "A Letter from Dr. B. Franklin, to Dr. Ingenhausz, Physician to the Emperor, at Vienna, on the Causes and Cure of Smokey Chimneys in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Vol. II, p. 1-36."

Material from Franklin's letter is used in two entries in the so-called Goldpapierheft, Nos. 38-39, Promies Vol. II, p. 219.

"Message to the book-binder regarding the immortality of the book." A note from the last wastebok claims: "The art of printing is indeed a Messiah among the inventions" (L 667). In a similar vein, Bonaventura has his poor poet start his "Letter of refusal to Life" in Franklin's terminology: "Man is good for nothing. Therefore I am striking him out. My Man has found no publisher, neither as persona vera nor ficta; for the last (my tragedy) no book dealer is willing to advance the printing costs" (p. 133).

Franklin's sentiments are even more closely paraphrased in the call to the "Beloved fellow citizens!" during the faked judgement day, when Kreuzgang declares in exasperation: "Behind you lies the whole of world history like a silly novel, in which there are some few tolerable characters and a legion of wretched ones. Ah, your Lord God made a mistake only in this one regard, that he did not himself elaborate it but left it up to you to write at it. Tell me, will he indeed consider it now worth the effort to translate the botched thing into a higher language or must he not rather, when he sees it lying before him in its whole shallowness, tear it to shreds in wrath and deliver you with all your plans over to oblivion?" (p. 105).

Bonaventura, like Lichtenberg, will develop and rephrase his models rather than quote them, because both are stimulated to develop their exceptionally original ideas by pondering on and reacting to the accepted canon. Lichtenberg urged readers to "endeavour to stay abreast of your time" (D 474), Bonaventura's agreement with this maxim is revealed by the ease with which he draws analogues from the wide range of eighteenth century epistemology. The large number of Lichtenberg's letters²⁴ and his notebooks provide much clearer insights into the development and applications of his thoughts than are available for most other thinkers, and they also make it possible in many instances to trace where and how they originated. A further and invaluable source for this information is the catalogue of Lichtenberg's library. This has been assembled by Hans Ludwig Gumbert by adding to the inventory of books that were auctioned, the list of the works which friends put aside for the family after Lichtenberg's death, and the handwritten record of those books which Lichtenberg lent to others between September 18th, 1785 and January 1799. Though Gumbert has accumulated by such means 1911 entries, many

²⁴ Unfortunately nothing has survived of letters to and from England, though there is much indirect evidence in his writings that many were written and received.

including several volumes, he also cautions that a complete catalogue of Lichtenberg's library can never be reconstructed.²⁵ This is mainly owing to Lichtenberg's extensive lending habits, which resulted from his conviction that good books must be circulated as much as possible. Thus his own reading preferences contributed significantly to the intellectual climate of his age.

Starting already with D 9, Lichtenberg, for instance, repeatedly mentions that he was reading, and striving to understand, Jacob Böhme. Yet nothing can be traced in his possession of this mystic, who is considered a specially formative influence on the romantic epoch.²⁶ Liberal lending habits may well account for this gap. They may also be responsible for the lack of any works by Hans Sachs (1494-1576) to whom Lichtenberg referred with familiarity during his early years.²⁷ Of the Dutch philosopher Frans

²⁵ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, pp. xi-xii.

²⁶ Fritz Martini, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1968), p. 333: "The mystical tradition of a Meister Eckhart, Tauber and Jakob Böhme merged during the romantic epoch with a speculative natural science that searched for magical and subconscious depths." Also Adams, pp. 216 and 218.

²⁷ Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, Letters Nos. 102, 103, 108, written at the end of 1772. Hans Sachs is also regarded as a rediscovery of the romantics, because of their love for the Middle Ages, see Martini, p. 327.

Hemsterhuis (1721-90)--likewise mentioned by Bonaventura and another favourite of the romantic age--Lichtenberg owned five volumes; two, the Oeuvres philosophiques, a present from Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, who had translated some of Hemsterhuis' writings.²⁸

An unusually large number of Lichtenberg's books were gifts received from authors and publishers, and also from well-wishers, among them George III. While unsolicited contributions to the library somewhat complicate the question of what Lichtenberg actually read, they reflect in themselves his wide contacts, and the esteem in which he was held by the learned. Though Lichtenberg could not afford to spend much on books and died at a comparatively early age, Gumbert judges his collection as of the highest possible standing.²⁹

A special feature is its comprehensiveness; mathematics and natural sciences comprise catalogue numbers 1-951, while 952-1911 cover the other fields of knowledge, with a particularly strong emphasis on philosophy and literature. Here as elsewhere English works, both in the original and in translation, are strongly represented, as are the classic authors upon

²⁸ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, Nos. 1307-1310.

²⁹ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, pp. xv-xvi.

whom English eighteenth-century criticism relied so heavily that Ian Jack regards the Augustan Age, with its faith in classical theory, as the last epoch of the Renaissance.³⁰

Jack's concern is with satire, and in this field Lichtenberg's library was especially well stocked. He owned the works of Horace in Latin and English, among them the prestigious edition by Baskerville, 1762 (Nos. 1516-1522). He owned a selection of dialogues (No. 1523) by Lucian, a German translation of Juvenal and a volume of satires by Juvenal and Persius (Nos. 1728-29). The Satiricon of Petronius is represented in a Latin, a German and an English edition (Nos. 1746-48). Only fragments of this Roman satire have survived. They come from the 15th and 16th part, subdivisions which are numerically reflected also in the Nightwatches.³¹

Only in his first published satire, Timorus (1771), did Lichtenberg give vent to his own sarcastic criticism of the legal apparatus; for while such attacks had become part of English satire and had always been a strong ingredient of the menippea,

³⁰ Ian Jack, Augustan Satire. Intention and Idiom in English Poetry, 1660-1700 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 156.

³¹ The Works of Petronius Arbiter (1736; rpt New York: AMS Press, 1975).

in Germany they were not tolerated. Consequently his remarks in this area are mainly confined to his private notes, and to reflections that in Germany only private themes, particularly the world of learning, remained safe subjects for satire (e.g. J 865).

Lichtenberg's concern with the procedures of law was, however, strongly represented in his library by Nos. 1208-1238a, which include a work on a case of infanticide (No. 1227) by Gottfried August Bürger (1747-94), who lived for a while also in Dieterich's house, and was helped and befriended by Lichtenberg. A man of many parts, he became most famous for his ballad "Lenore" (1774), which is cited as an example for love transcending the boundaries of life in the Tenth Nightwatch (p. 161). No. 1213 is a compendium on German Civil Law by the Göttingen professor H. M. G. Grellmann (1756-1804), who also wrote a book on gypsies, in which he attempted to investigate their history, way of life and tribal constitution (No. 1839). This work was printed by Dieterich in 1783, and Lichtenberg had a copy of the second edition (1787) in his library. The author of the Nightwatches uses the authentic gypsy term for people outside their tribe, Blanker (p. 234), a sign that he was well versed in gypsy ways and lore.

From another professorial colleague, C. F. G. Meister, brother of Lichtenberg's teacher, predecessor and friend, A. L. F. Meister, there are the first two parts of a voluminous work on criminal law (No. 1231). Though such books were usually gifts from author or printer, there is evidence that Lichtenberg actually used them, for legal analogies are often employed in his writings.

A specially remarkable feature of Lichtenberg's library is the number of English books in all its many subdivisions. Among the law titles ten works fall in this category, two of them in German translation. No. 1233 includes "The whole Proceedings of the King's Commission of the Peace . . . held at Justice Hall in the Old Bailey. Taken in Short-Hand. London, 1775-90." How much Lichtenberg actually owned of this extensive series remains doubtful, as he lent parts of his collection to friends, among them Bürger.

Lichtenberg's extensive knowledge and use of English books is so well attested that Hans Ludwig Gumbert was first alerted to the incompleteness of the library auction catalogue through its lack of works by Pope and Fielding.³² These were then located in the list of books kept for the family. Few

³² Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, p. 208; p. xi.

of the leading English authors of the eighteenth century were found to be missing, and of many important works there is more than one edition, and frequently a German translation as well.

Of Shakespeare (No. 1796-1801), for instance, there are nine volumes of the London edition of 1760, and ten volumes of the London edition of 1773, the latter with notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens. There is also a German translation by Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743-1820), an Anglophile whom Lichtenberg knew well and with whom he corresponded. Only volumes VI and VII of this 1775-77 edition could be found in Lichtenberg's possession. Gumbert assumes that the others were lost in lending.³³ Of the separate copies which Lichtenberg owned, King Lear and Timon of Athens were published by the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane, while Hamlet and Macbeth were from the Johnson edition (Nos. 1796-1801). Wieland is represented by Nos. 1631- 33, though not by his Shakespeare translation. Lichtenberg had a specially high esteem for this author, whom he aligned with Shakespeare and Sterne (B 322).

Johnson was regarded by Lichtenberg as a particularly significant writer, and valued

³³ Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, p. 284.

especially for his clarity of thought and the apparent facility with which he explains moral and abstract precepts in simple parabolic metaphors (J 788). Johnson's writings are densely dotted with memorable maxims and aphorisms, in which everyday experience is distilled into precepts of general validity, a mode of expression which was to bring acclaim to Lichtenberg too. They shared other attitudes, notably a rejection of the prevailing urge to construct intellectual systems, partly because of their confining narrowness, but even more so because they are inconsistent with the everchanging realities of life and do not take into account the inadequacy of human knowledge. Though they saw no virtue in the mere accumulation of knowledge, they upheld the value of tradition, but stressed the limitations of human understanding and hence the necessity to keep options open. Neither attempted therefore to record his philosophy in a systematic manner.

Jean H. Hagstrum shows that Johnson approached literature as the representation of the available and universal experience of life, and that he expected literature to lead back again to life and experience.³⁴ Lichtenberg shared this view, and like

³⁴ Jean H. Hagstrum, Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1952) 1968), pp. 174, 179.

Johnson derived his intellectual decisiveness from his consistent endeavour to apply the lessons enshrined in philosophy and literature to the practical problems of life. Both men regarded subjectivism as dangerous escapism and tried to stem its tide.

Lichtenberg's many different ventures into publishing were directed by the desire to counteract diffuse and wishful thinking with empiricism, and his wish to publicize Johnson's work in Germany appears as part of this strategy. In 1782 he prepared for the Göttingische Magazin, of which he was founder and main editor, a report on Pope's life and works, which he had translated and adapted from Johnson's Lives of the English Poets.³⁵ He promised a sequel on Pope's characteristics as an author at the end of the article, and planned to bring further lives of English poets from Johnson to the attention of his readers. Nothing came of this, as the magazine ceased publication in 1784. Lichtenberg therefore suggested that Dieterich should print the whole edition of Johnson's English poets.³⁶ Lichtenberg spent much

³⁵ Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Vermischte Schriften, Vol. V. Ed. by Lichtenberg's Sons (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1844), pp. 33-70. (Rpt. from Göttingisches Magazin, Part 3, No.1, 1782).

³⁶ Briefwechsel, Vol. II, Nos. 1044 and 1097.

time on this enterprise and also took over the final revision. It proved, however, unprofitable and Dieterich abandoned the ambitious venture after only two volumes.³⁷ Though Lichtenberg was alert to Johnson's occasional limitations and sometimes deviated from his judgements, especially in regard to Fielding (J 807), he considered the Lives of the Poets as a masterpiece in which the fusion of life and literature was achieved on the basis of the Horatian precept of educating while entertaining.

Horace recommends this mixture of the useful and the pleasant in his Ars Poetica which was much consulted by the literary critics of the Enlightenment. Johnson discussed these poetic instructions in depth and quoted frequently from them.³⁸ Ars Poetica, also known as the Epistle to the Pisos, is several times evoked by Bonaventura and quoted by Kreuzgang, the protagonist of the Nightwatches (p. 195), who also aspires to the Horatian ideal "to unite the useful with the pleasurable" (p. 219). Even in his scientific

³⁷ Personal information from Frau Elisabeth Willnat, Göttingen, from an unpublished dissertation on Dieterich's Publishing House.

³⁸ James Boswell, Life of Johnson (1791). Ed. R. W. Chapmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 120, 140, 158, 360, 443, 693, 771-74, 939, 1034, 1093.

writing Lichtenberg adhered to this maxim to such a degree that his entertainingly presented ideas were widely disseminated among the general public, but were not always taken seriously by specialists. He owned Horace's works in several editions in Latin and in English, including the much admired Baskerville edition of 1762, plus a German translation of a Dutch work on Quintus Horatius Flaccus as Citizen of Rome, (Nos. 1516-22).

Lichtenberg owned, and frequently consulted, Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, in the London edition of 1773 (No. 1460). Several of his notes attest to exceptional interest in the meaning of words, and to his exceptional command of the English language. For example:

In Johnson's Dictionary the words: Predilection, respectable, descriptive, sulky, mimetick, isolated, inimical, decompose have been omitted by oversight. (J 836)

Similar concern is shown in J 811 and in J 822, and he noted that "in the word abandon in Johnson's great Dictionary credulity should have been used instead of cruelty" (J 1041). Besides two different editions of Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Lichtenberg also owned a separate edition of the Life of Savage--a celebrated eighteenth-century account of the sufferings of a poor poet--and the Milton volume of

Dieterich's abortive Johnson series which Lichtenberg had edited himself (Nos. 1651-53, 1659).

The works catalogued in the Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana indicate thorough and solid reading habits. In conjunction with the notes and remarks in letters, the contents of the library demonstrate that Lichtenberg investigated the topics which particularly concerned him in considerable depth. Though "the difficulty of access to the large and varied canon of his writings," is as formidable in the case of Johnson³⁹ as it is for Lichtenberg, the thoughts and methods of both authors are exceptionally well documented: for Lichtenberg, through the self-testimony of his notebooks and in lesser measure through his correspondence; for Johnson, through the meticulous preservation of his conversations by James Boswell (1740-1795). The minutiae which these testimonies contain were a deliberate contribution to the "science of man," acute observations towards a true and rounded concept of human personality.

Boswell's attention to seeming trivia accords with the opinion of Johnson, whom he reports as having said: "The great thing to be recorded . . . is

³⁹ Samuel Johnson. Ed. Donald Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1984. Introduction, p. xii.

the state of your own mind; and you should write down everything that you remember, for you cannot judge at first what is good or bad; and write immediately while the impression is fresh, for it will not be the same afterwards."⁴⁰

To this principle Lichtenberg adhered all through his adult life, and to the same end: to study the human condition and the workings of the mind. He also shared Johnson's conviction that the key to human behaviour can be found anywhere, in common life as well as in noteworthy historic events. He is not joking when he attributes his own considerable psychological understanding to observations at weddings, christenings and university feasts (E 189) and he held that family life mirrors great political incidents with its miniature wars and peace treaties, resolutions, reforms and power struggles (L 106).

Like many of Lichtenberg's ideas, which are crowded together in his notebooks without context, introduction or follow-up, this suggestion might appear as the whimsical inspiration of the moment. It does, however, echo one of Johnson's Rambler essays, which states that "no nation omits to record the actions of their ancestors, however bloody,

⁴⁰ Boswell, e.g. pp. 25, 868, 997, 1013, 1023, 1088; p. 513.

savage and rapacious" and then goes on to claim: "The same disposition, as different opportunities call it forth, discovers itself in great or little things." Johnson therefore offers to relate "the history and antiquities of the several garrets" in which The Rambler has resided.⁴¹ He ends with the "observation of Juvenal, that a single house will show whatever is done or suffered in the world," thus pointing back to a source which was particularly popular with the English eighteenth-century satirists, Lichtenberg included (Nos. 1728-29). For Bonaventura, too, the microcosm of common or particular events represents the world (p. 143).

Johnson and Lichtenberg share a heritage of classical satire; among its major themes are madness, suicide, superstitions and dreams. These reflect general trends in a time which based its epistemology on the study of classical authors. Nevertheless, the serious intensity with which Johnson and Lichtenberg approached these darker problems was exceptional, and several parallelisms show that Lichtenberg based some of his thoughts on Johnson's work.

⁴¹ Samuel Johnson, pp. 239-42, p. 239, Rambler, No. 161, Tuesday, October 1, 1751, "A Rooming-House Chronicle."

In the Socratic effort to "know thyself" Lichtenberg habitually dissected and rationalized his dreams, and he tells how once in a dream he related an incident to someone else, who then reminded him of a detail he had entirely forgotten. How, he asked himself, could that happen, as it was his dream, and he himself must therefore have reproduced everything in it (L 587). Similarly, Johnson "related, that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him." On reflection, however, he found that the wit of this supposed antagonist by "whose superiority" he felt himself depressed, was also furnished by himself.⁴²

Besides literary themes the two men also shared many acquaintances, as Lichtenberg moved partly in the circles which Johnson frequented. He kept modestly quiet about most of his social experiences in London, but recorded that he dined with General Paoli.⁴³ As he refers to Boswell's description of him (E 269), he must have been familiar with Boswell's Account of Corsica (1768), though it was

⁴² Boswell, p. 1069.

⁴³ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 92, March 15, 1775.

not in his library. Neither did he own Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands (1775) or Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides (1785), though his own visit to the Isle of Heligoland in 1773 recalls Johnson's celebrated excursion, and was not less trend-setting.⁴⁴ Interest in the Hebrides was also kindled by the Ossianic controversies, which aroused even stronger passions in Germany than in England, as enthusiasm for Ossian had stimulated "a lyric genre which flourished for a brief time under the name of 'bardic' poetry."⁴⁵

Though Lichtenberg emphatically opposed these effusions, he refrained from taking sides in the Ossian question, possibly because several writers he valued, like Gerstenberg, von Haller and especially his friend Eschenburg, were filled with admiration for McPherson's Celtic imitations, the more so as the ancient Celts were freely equated with the Germanic tribes. Lichtenberg himself was interested in the religious aspects of Ossian's songs, as they seemed to him an uncanny anticipation of modern thoughts on God and nature. He even had agreed to get some

⁴⁴ Wolfgang Promies. "Der Deutschen Bade-Meister: Georg Christoph Lichtenberg und die Wirkungen aufgeklärter Schriften." Photoin, IV, 1981, pp. 1-15 (pp. 2-3).

⁴⁵ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 126.

additional Ossianic poems printed, which were offered to him as authentic by Edmund de Harold.⁴⁶ Probably he soon identified them as forgeries, because nothing came of the plan. He also noted that there was no mention of the wolf in Ossian, an observation which Boswell likewise records. Additionally he mentions that the cock occurs, though introduced into Europe much later. Johnson regarded Ossian as a fraud, because McPherson could not show him any original manuscripts. His verdict that "a man might write such stuff for ever, if he would abandon his mind to it"⁴⁷ sums up Lichtenberg's often voiced opinion on German neo-bardic poetry.

Ossian's supposed father was the legendary Fingal, and his famous cave on the Scottish island Staffa is mentioned by Kreuzgang as one of the desirable places to which a beggar might gain entrance (p. 217). Johnson and Boswell came close to it, but did not include Staffa in their itinerary. It had, however, been visited in the previous year by

⁴⁶ Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. II, No. 1097.

⁴⁷ Boswell, p. 615, probably emanating from Thomas Percy; p. 1207.

Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) whose description first drew attention to this wonder of nature.⁴⁸

Lichtenberg was introduced to Sir Joseph Banks and his companion on the journey round the world with Captain Cook, Dr. Daniel Solander (1730-1781), in March 1775, and they in turn acquainted him with Omai, the native from Tahiti who frequented London society until he returned to his native island with Captain Cook on his third and last voyage.⁴⁹ All three were also acquainted with Johnson and Boswell.⁵⁰ Sir Joseph Banks joined Johnson's Literary Club in 1778,⁵¹ and he was President of the Royal Society when Lichtenberg was admitted. Such

⁴⁸ Significantly Kreuzgang talks of a "free pass to nature," but the three places he mentions are all distinguished by literary and philosophical connections. His experience of nature is thus in the tradition of the Enlightenment: evocative of incidents and literary precedent. This attitude is also exemplified by Johnson and Boswell, who on their Scottish tour expressed their responses to nature by quoting passages from literature, especially from Shakespeare.

⁴⁹ Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes, p. 132.

⁵⁰ Cf. Johnson's opinions on Omai, Boswell, p. 723, April 1776. Lichtenberg had met him at a dinner given by Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society and personal physician to the Queen, who had acted as an intermediary between him and Lichtenberg; see Letter to Ernst Gottfried Baldinger, 10th January 1775, ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, No. 269, pp. 494-95.

⁵¹ Boswell, p. 1005: "Mr. Banks desires to be admitted; he will be a very honourable accession."

connections intensified Lichtenberg's interest in Johnson, which is reflected in his reading in the winter 1789/90 of Sir John Hawkins' Life of Samuel Johnson.⁵² He also read Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi's Anecdotes (1786) on Johnson, shortly after he finished with Boswell's Life, probably because Boswell discusses Mrs. Thrale and her work so frequently. Boswell also comments on the affair of the hapless Rev. Dr. W. Dodd, who was hanged in 1777 for embezzlement. Johnson's unsuccessful championship of his case turned it into a cause célèbre to which Lichtenberg referred in his article "Über Physiognomik" (1778).⁵³ Lichtenberg's interest in Soame Jenyns' View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion (No. 1325), may also be due to Johnson who reviewed this work in: "A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil." (1757). Many of Johnson's ideas on life and afterlife, which are otherwise widely diffused in his writings in the form of general maxims and observations, are distilled in this essay. Jenyns himself offers little more than a summary of current thoughts, including the concept of the universe as a system of beings descending by

⁵² See Promies, Vol. I, notebook entries beginning with J 199.

⁵³ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 256-95, p. 272, also F 942.

insensible degrees, from infinite perfection to absolute nothing, with man on probation to find a place commensurate with his achievements.

Such ideas go back to antiquity, especially to Pythagoras, but in the eighteenth century they had been reactivated through contact with the East. Hence Johnson speaks of the "Arabian scale of existence." He confesses to have often considered such a system himself, "but always left the inquiry in doubt and uncertainty."⁵⁴ Lichtenberg held similar views. Thoughts on a celestial hierarchy surface in his notes over many years, and in D 412, for instance, he declares,

I can hardly believe that it will be possible to prove that we are the work of a highest being, and not have rather been assembled by a very imperfect one to while away the time.

This tormenting impossibility of arriving at a definitive conclusion becomes a central quest for Kreuzgang, who resembles Johnson and Lichtenberg also in this, that the search for eternity does not deflect his mind from the realities of everyday life.

Johnson was an active observer and judge of the political contentions which stirred his times, and, when the controversies with the American colonies reached their height, he produced "An Answer to the

⁵⁴ Samuel Johnson, pp. 522-43, p. 539; pp. 524-25.

Resolutions and Address of the American Congress" that was intended to calm tempers and support law and order: Taxation: No Tyranny (1774). Lichtenberg owned an anonymous answer to it: Taxation Tyranny (1775, No. 1123). According to diverse notes and excerpts, Lichtenberg was also a regular reader of the Gentleman's Magazine, which Johnson had helped "to convert from a rather dreary collection of reprints from current newspapers to the prototype of the modern 'intellectual' journal, designed to inform and stimulate the minds of the educated and educatable general public."⁵⁵

Johnson's and Lichtenberg's comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the enlightened concerns of their time fuelled their passionate intellectual preoccupation with the problems of progress. They were also farsighted enough to recognize human limitations, and this acceptance resulted in a strong sense of responsibility towards the public. Hence they were both convinced that "the only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life or better to endure it."⁵⁶

Even a brief comparison of the contents of Lichtenberg's library with his reading and writing

⁵⁵ Samuel Johnson, Introduction, pp. xi-xii.

⁵⁶ Samuel Johnson, p. 536.

shows that his wish to make Johnson more accessible to German readers was based on thorough study and an exceptionally systematical and comprehensive knowledge of eighteenth-century English writers. Bonaventura shares this background and has also this in common with Lichtenberg, that while his inspirations may seem spontaneous and often effervescent, closer investigation will prove their enlightened and farsighted intent which begins to be fully appreciated only in present times.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616) IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT.

Pursuit of English literary influences on the Nightwatches reveals strong parallels to Lichtenberg's reading, his thoughts, interests and preferences; Kreuzgang's references to Shakespeare demonstrate the same thorough and unusual knowledge of the English dramatist's works that distinguished Lichtenberg. Kreuzgang, too, values Shakespeare's insight into the human condition, and he commands Lichtenberg's exceptional paraphrasing techniques: his gift to absorb the best thoughts of others and turn them to his own purpose. When Klaus Bartenschlager observes of Bonaventura's methods: "Shakespeare is not discussed, but integrated into the perspective of the narrator,"¹ he also describes the methods of Lichtenberg.

¹ Klaus Bartenschlager, "Bonaventuras Shakespeare: Zur Bedeutung Shakespeares für die 'Nachtwachen'." Großbritannien und Deutschland. Festschrift für John Bourke (München: Goldmann, 1974), pp. 347-71, p. 348.

Bartenschlager concentrates his investigation mainly on the virtuosity with which this integration is achieved. As the Shakespearean absorption of the Nightwatches surpasses the contemporary German norm in intensity and extent, even at a time when admiration of Shakespeare was at a peak, Bartenschlager treats the Nightwatches in comparative isolation. Where he refers to literary context he does so in general terms, and restricts himself to German literary criticism. Thus he refers to Herder, Goethe, Tieck and Schlegel,² all of whom, however, had evolved their views directly or indirectly from the English literary critics who were led and stimulated by Dryden into a growing realisation of the unusual genius their country had produced.

John Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668) heralded a shift of focus from Ben Johnson to Shakespeare, and based the claim for the latter's superiority on the daring presentation of "mirth mixed with tragedy." Acceptance of Dryden's views was facilitated by his patriotic opinion that the English, and foremost Shakespeare, "have invented, increased and perfected a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the

² Bartenschlager, p. 348.

ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragic-comedy."³

Shakespeare is therefore praised as the unsurpassed master of mixing serious scenes with merry interludes, and to this technique, which after all mirrors the hazards and unpredictable changes of life itself, he added the perception that while both aspects of the human existence may remain irreconcilable, they can nevertheless illuminate each other. Dryden sees Shakespeare as "the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul."⁴ The renewed interest in Shakespeare's plays which resulted from Dryden's praise led to various new editions, notably those of Pope (1725) and Johnson (1765).

Pope proclaimed that

if ever any Author deserved the name of an Original, it was Shakespeare; his poetry was Inspiration indeed: he is not so much an Imitator, as an Instrument, of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks thro' him.

His Characters are so much Nature her self, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as Copies of her...every single

³ Hazard Adams, Critical Theory since Plato (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," pp. 228-257, p. 244.

⁴ Ed. Adams, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," p. 247.

character in Shakespeare is as much an Individual, as those in Life itself."⁵

Kreuzgang's appreciation of Shakespeare is similar. Klaus Bartenschlager sees it as part of the controversy over creating versus imitating, a persistent late eighteenth-century theme in aesthetics which, in his view, for Bonaventura's generation was insolubly linked with Herder's exhortation of Shakespeare's genius.⁶

Lawrence Marsden Price found in Herder's essay "echoes of Pope, Warburton, Johnson, and Young, who had extolled Shakespeare's knowledge of the human soul or even called him creator," and he suggests that "for verbal parallels couched in like effusive tones we must turn to Henry Home." With all these authors, including Herder, Lichtenberg was quite familiar.⁷ He also contributed actively to the

⁵ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope. Sel. and intr. Aubrey Williams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), "Preface to the Works of Shakespeare," pp. 460-472, pp. 460-61.

⁶ Bartenschlager, p. 348.

⁷ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 246. Lichtenberg owned: Complete Works of Alexander Pope, with his last correction. Together with the notes of William Warburton, London 1764, 6 vols. Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, No. 1662; a German prose translation of Warburton's Pope edition by Johann Jacob Dusch, 1784, No. 1663; a German translation of Henry Home's Elements of Criticism (1762) in 3 vols., Leipzig 1763-66, No. 1316; Johann Gottfried Herder Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität. Riga 1793 (No. 1311), and Ursachen des gesunkenen Geschmacks bei den

reception of Shakespeare's works in Germany, for he valued the Elizabethan poet above all as an inspired interpreter of human nature, and held him up as an example to young writers, because his characters were not copied from literature but from life, and thus of permanent and general value. With this validity in mind he himself used Shakespeare's works as the ideal against which to test thoughts and emotions. He had already integrated Hamlet into his way of thinking when he wrote on December 2nd 1770, in one of the suicidal moods which tempted him throughout his adult life,

Luckily under the circumstances I still have a good conscience, otherwise I would already have gone, the sooner the better to the rest, from which Hamlet shrank because of the dreams which he feared would disturb it. (B 338)

Long before Wilhelm Meister was published (1787-88), from which the German romantics took their cue, Hamlet had already become part of his way of thinking.

A strong influence on Lichtenberg's sense of Shakespeare was Johnson's "Preface to Shakespeare," first published in 1765 in Johnson's eight-volume edition of Shakespeare's plays. This essay follows

verschiedenen Völkern, da er geblühet. Berlin 1775 (No. 1775) and Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. Bemerkungen und Träume. Riga 1788, a work on dreams and the soul, (NO. 1313).

Pope in criticism of various details and methods in Shakespeare's works. Johnson confirms and enlarges Dryden's patriotic views regarding the serio-comic genre, and he declares Shakespeare to be "above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life." Nature equates to human nature, as it does throughout the enlightenment, and Johnson admires "practical axioms and domestic wisdom" and believes "that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence." Johnson was convinced that: "Nothing can please many and please long, but just representations of general nature." Shakespeare's ability to create characters "which are the genuine progeny of common humanity," revealed him therefore as a poet in the original sense of the word, a maker.⁸

When he talks of Ophelia, Kreuzgang evaluates Shakespeare in the same terms. After "the mighty hand of Shakespeare, that second creator, had seized her violently," he witnesses at first with critical and later with passionate fascination a

⁸ Ed. Adams, "Preface to Shakespeare", pp. 329-330, p. 330.

"transformation of the real into a poetic person" (p.199).

Johnson's "Preface to Shakespeare" became a touchstone of English literary criticism. It was not much noted in Germany,⁹ but it left traces in Lichtenberg's satirical attacks on literary and intellectual abuses. The best known of these, "On Physiognomy against the Physiognomists" (1778), is preceded by a quotation from Henry V (Act II,2) and he uses also various examples from Antony and Cleopatra,¹⁰ plays which Johnson had singled out in his "Preface."

Never content with mere citation, Lichtenberg merges comments from both works to express his own praise of Shakespeare, "who was able to combine for his purpose distant concepts, which perhaps never before had met in a human mind, and who could call

⁹ In the 69. Part of the Hamburgische Dramaturgie, which was published in December 1767, Lessing does not mention Johnson by name, but attributes to "one of our most recent writers" the view that Shakespeare has been censured for his tragi-comic vein, though this should instead be regarded as a virtue, as it imitates the natural process of human existence. Besides the English claimers for priority in this field--championed by Dryden and Johnson--Lessing acknowledges the strong Spanish influences on the mixed genre, and draws especial attention to Lope de Vega's satiric New Art of Comedy Writing. Lessings sämtliche Schriften, Vol. X, pp. 77-78.

¹⁰ Promies, Vol. III, "Über Physiognomik; wider die Physiognomen." pp. 256-95, pp. 256, 279, 281.

the world an O and finally the stage a wooden O," a view which equates the world with nothing.¹¹

Lichtenberg demonstrates here a technique which Bartenschlager finds especially characteristic for Bonaventura,¹² and also shows his thorough familiarity with a tradition which is not only important to Shakespeare's imagery, but is an integral part of tragi-comic writing, especially of menippean satires from Lucian onwards.¹³

¹¹ Promies, Vol.III, p. 279. Lichtenberg amalgamated Antony and Cleopatra, V, 2: "His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck/ A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted/ The little O, the earth," and Henry V, Chorus,I: "can this cockpit hold/ The vasty fields of France? or may we cram/ Within this wooden O the very casques/ That did affright the air at Agincourt?"

¹² Bartenschlager, p. 359: "Das bisher Gesagte zeigt den strengen Perspektivismus des Nachtwachendichters in der Wahl seiner Shakespeare-Motive und ihre kunstvolle Integration in die Weltsicht des Protagonisten, durch Auswahl, Teilidentifizierung, Kontrastierung, Parodie und originelle Umwandlungen verschiedener Art."

¹³ Lucian. "Icaromenippus" in Towards Excellence. Ed. Vincent Milosevich (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), e.g. p. 23: "some relieve the Gods of all care, as we relieve the superannuated of their civic duties; in fact, they treat them exactly like supernumeraries on the stage;" p. 27: "Well, friend, such are the earthly dancers; the life of man is just such a discordant performance; not only are the voices jangled, but the steps are not uniform, the motions not concerted, the objectives not agreed upon--until the impresario dismisses them one by one from the stage, with a "not wanted;" p. 32: "their model is the tragic actor, from whom if you strip off the mask and the gold-spangled robe, there is nothing left but a paltry fellow hired for a few shillings to play a part."

When Kreuzgang speaks of "Cleopatra's flower basket, among the roses of which the poisonous snake lay in wait" (p. 69), he refers to the same scene in Antony and Cleopatra from which Lichtenberg took the simile of life, seen as an empty stage. By filling the basket of figs with flowers,¹⁴ Bonaventura moulds the metaphor closer to his own purpose and to the German environment in which Kreuzgang operates.

Just before the entrance of the "rural fellow"--one of Shakespeare's tragic clowns--Cleopatra has envisaged her fate in captivity as that of an "Egyptian puppet," and she fears that there "the quick comedians extemporarily will stage us." The clown delivers the fatal basket with a melancholy discourse on worms and death, the gods and the devil. The fifth act of Antony and Cleopatra abounds in the key words which permeate the Nightwatches.

Bartenschlager regards as "the sum of the plays of which Kreuzgang takes note: Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, with a reference to the Tempest and possibly also to Troilus and Cressida." All are plays which deal with primary concerns of the nightwatchman, and the first

¹⁴ Act V, Sc. II: Guard: "Here is a rural fellow . . . he brings you figs."

three made a lasting impression on Lichtenberg, while he was in England.¹⁵

The allusions to the Tempest and to Troilus and Cressida occur when Kreuzgang compares the antique ideal of beauty with an ugly reality, exemplified by Caliban and Thersites (p. 195). Thersites in Troilus and Cressida is, according to Robert C. Elliot, "unquestionably the greatest master of scurrilous abuse among characters of this type" in Shakespeare; a pharmakos who suffers for the evils of the community; a provoker, a "railer who is privileged to abuse whom he will;" a figure with general traits for which Thersites has been metonymic since Homer.¹⁶ Kreuzgang with his sarcastic despair is one of his descendants.

The mocking and bitter aspects of Shakespeare's fools, which the acerbic Thersites represents, occupy the center stage in Timon of Athens. The Greek satirist Lucian of Samosata had devoted one of his Dialogues to Timon, and Robert C. Elliot sees Shakespeare approach closest to satire in this play. He counts Shakespeare's Timon with Molière's Alceste

¹⁵ Bartenschlager, p. 359; Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. II, p. 274.

¹⁶ Robert C. Elliot, The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 136-39.

and Swift's Gulliver among "the great misanthropes of literature: a satirist satirized, with "full cognizance of the dreadful power of the extreme." Humour, though much of it bitter and even invective, softens the impact of human limitations and imperfections in this black comedy. Yet "the denunciation of man is frightfully powerful and it stands."¹⁷

This basic attitude is not the only reminiscence of Timon in the Nightwatches. A central symbol in Timon is "eating roots," which epitomizes reliance on nature rather than on the fickleness of man. Already in Act I, Sc. II Apemantus, a churlish philosopher and a more stoic double or alter ego of Timon, declares at the end of an apostrophe to the immortal gods: "Rich men sin, and I eat root." Moderation, frugality and self-sufficiency are the virtues which he wants to promote by this symbolic action. Timon learns to aspire to these virtues only in Act IV, when he has lost his immense riches and with them his sycophantic friends, and decides to retreat into the wilderness of self-imposed exile. Cursing the earth, asking for universal discord by imploring that "twinning brothers of one womb" should be set against each other through different fortunes, (an event of

¹⁷ Elliot, p. 167.

which the Fourth and Fifth Nightwatches tell), he finally calls out "Earth, yield me roots" (Act IV, Sc. III). While he digs he finds a treasure of gold, but finally recognizing and despising its potential for evil he casts it aside and persists in looking for roots. When thieves beset him, he advises them: "Why should you want? Behold the earth hath roots."

"That nature, being sick of man's unkindness/
Should yet be hungry!" he exclaims and then apostrophises nature in the words which Kreuzgang uses repeatedly: "Common Mother thou," and he implores nature to

yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate
From forth thy plenteous bosom one poor root.
(Act IV, Sc. III)

Equivalent events occur in the Fifteenth Nightwatch. After one of his misanthropic outbursts of "aggravated hatred for all the men of reason" (p. 217) Kreuzgang calls himself, like Timon, a beggar and rejoices that "the earth still had roots in her lap which she did not deny," and calls her "this ancient mother" (p. 219). The root he digs out constitutes the only sustenance of which he partakes during a narration abounding in metaphors of eating and digestion. Further indication of the symbolic nature of this meagre meal is a preceding reference to Horace's advice in the letter to the Piso Family

death is therefore bereft of finality; and the twice repeated exhortation "pass" implies that a better place can be reached by those who are prepared to move on. Shakespeare sows these seeds of hope almost imperceptibly and they can be easily cast aside or overlooked, and Bonaventura hides his clues with similar care.

The Nightwatches also tell of hidden treasure, but there is a change of emphasis from Timon: instead of sterile metal a young child is found, unencumbered by any worldly possessions but "already a quite complete citizen of the world" (p. 61). Goethe's ballad Der Schatzgräber (1798) a genie similarly conveyed the message that life and active endeavour, not gold, constitute real riches. Bonaventura does not deliver such advice; he relies on hints and implications, and expects the reader to find a meaningful pattern in them, as he will have to do in reality, if he desires life to make sense.¹⁹

The Fifth Nightwatch ends with Timon's wish, that two "brothers of one womb" should be divided by strife and scorn each other (Act IV, Sc. III). Their

¹⁹ The Christian child-symbol was secularized by the romantics, as epitomized in the painting of Philipp Otto Runge (1777-1810): Der Morgen (1805). Kreuzgang's symbolic conception during Christmas night affirms the allegorical character of his family history.

catastrophe compresses in a few paragraphs the complicated intrigues of Othello, with Iago's fabrication and manipulation of misleading evidence, and the desperate regret of the husband, who understands the truth too late and follows the murder of an innocent wife with suicide. The melodramatic aspects of this scenario are subordinated to the human paradox that loss or threatened loss intensifies the wish to possess, and enhances what is otherwise not valued enough. Bonaventura writes:

Ponce only awoke when she died, and now for the first time he seemed to love, because he had lost love, and to feel a loving heart so as to pierce it through. (p. 97)

The gory end is left to the imagination of the reader: "Silently he was remarried with Ines," and the full extent of the tragedy is merely mirrored in the survivor's reaction: "Don Juan stood mute and insane among the dead."

The opinion that life attains its value through the fear of death was shared by Lichtenberg with Shakespeare and recurs in the Nightwatches. Among his first notebook entries Lichtenberg claimed: "To make us more receptive to our good luck when it is losing some of its lustre we have to imagine that it has been lost and that we had received it only this very moment" (A 72). This thought he presented later

in a polished and often quoted aphorism: "Lasting luck looses lustre merely by its length" (F 6).

In Much Ado About Nothing it is the Friar, the exponent of moderation and good sense, who offers this insight:

That what we have we prize not to the worth
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
While it was ours. (Act IV, Sc.I)

This bitter comedy presents tragic themes, but transposes them into a key that allows a lighthearted final solution, as if to demonstrate the arbitrary fickleness of life. While in Othello Shakespeare dispenses with comic relief, he varies the theme with the Iago-like traitor Don John in Much Ado About Nothing, which has tomb scenes reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, misunderstandings and pretended death, and hovers dangerously close to real tragedy. The constant masking and unmasking creates no lighthearted or festive spirit, but rather an atmosphere of uncertainty where happiness or horror can gain the upper hand at any moment, and may result in bliss or destruction according to the whim of circumstances. Bitter love and "enraged affection" (Act II, Sc.III) add to the ambivalence as they do in Kreuzgang's intense and unromantic wooing.

The play also contains a group of nightwatchmen led by their constable Dogberry, whose blundering ignorance mingles with sound instinct, and paradoxically solves enigmas which confound shrewder minds. His instructions foreshadow some of the decisions Kreuzgang takes on his nightly rounds, as for instance, when Dogberry counsels: "If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty" (Act III, Sc. III). When Kreuzgang makes a similar decision he seems as whimsical and ineffective as Dogberry, but he too, like Shakespeare, is commenting on the helplessness of well-meaning people faced with the injustice of this world.

Dogberry's conclusions are distilled from experience, as well as from his own peculiar logic and thus he leaves his men with the exhortation: "The watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will." The men respond by deciding to "sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed," an example followed by Kreuzgang. "Among the favorite places in which I am accustomed to stop during my nightwatches," he

reports, "belongs the ledge in the old Gothic cathedral" (p.59).

On his second visit to England, Lichtenberg recorded that he had seen Much Ado About Nothing on December 10th, 1774, with the actor John Lee in the lead. Less than a year later, on November 7th, 1775, he noted that he had seen Garrick as Benedick for the seventh time. He had been to Othello during his first and shorter stay in England, and when he came to London next in 1774/75 he saw King Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet repeatedly.²⁰

The fame of London theatrical life, and in particular of its most celebrated actor, David Garrick (1717-79), had spread to Germany, and visitors were eager to bring back news of his outstanding performances. On his second visit to England, Lichtenberg was able to see the admired actor, now very near the end of his career, in several of his most famous roles, and on October 15th, 1775, he was introduced to him by the favorite page of his host in London, the King. Garrick paid

²⁰ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. II, pp. 58, 196, and 274.

him the compliment to declare that he had never heard a foreigner speak so free of accent.²¹

Admiration for Garrick's brilliance led Lichtenberg to analyse not only the craft by which he achieved his effects on the stage, but also the roles in which he starred. As Garrick specialised in expressing even minute and detailed changes in human thoughts and motivation, Hamlet became the part with which he was most identified. Lichtenberg saw him twice in this character. When his friend in Göttingen, the Anglophile Christian Heinrich Boie (1744-1806), asked for an account of this experience, Lichtenberg produced a penetrating analysis of Garrick's craft, and centered his report on the Hamlet performance.

Boie was an influential critic himself, and the editor of the journal Deutsches Museum, which contributed much to the formation of German public opinion in literary matters. Altogether Lichtenberg wrote three letters for his friend, and in his usual thorough manner not only described the actor for whom the readers had indicated so much interest, but also the plays in which he excelled and even the whole

²¹ Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, p. 569, Letter No. 289 to Johann Andreas Schernhagen, Oct. 16, 1775.

English theatrical scene, as the background which made his perfection possible.

To gain a better understanding of the reasons for Garrick's outstanding success, Lichtenberg also went to watch the actor Henderson as Hamlet.²² The letters show passionate interest in the plays, and demonstrate the importance of Garrick for the growth of general interest in Shakespeare.²³ The precise and almost cinematic descriptions are the best record of Garrick's acting techniques which has ever come to light.²⁴

The influence of Hamlet on German literature became considerable, especially after Goethe integrated the role into the educational scheme of his Bildungsroman, Wilhelm Meister, on which he started work after Lichtenberg's letters appeared in the Deutsches Museum. Goethe's ideas on Hamlet, and the stage direction which Wilhelm Meister envisages

²² Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, p. 802, Letter No. 475.

²³ Lichtenberg's Visits to England As Described in his Letters and Diaries. Tr. and annot. Margaret L. Mare and W. H. Quarrell. Oxford Studies in Modern Languages and Literature (1938; New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969).

²⁴ George W. Stone, Jr. and George M. Kahrl, David Garrick. A Critical Biography (Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 485.

for the part,²⁵ are so consistent with Lichtenberg's report in the Second Letter that Goethe's views must have been influenced either by Lichtenberg or else by other accounts of Garrick's acting.

Goethe's discourse on Hamlet in Wilhelm Meister aroused much enthusiasm for the play in Germany and exerted strong influence on romantic writers. Wilhelm Meister is therefore mentioned by Klaus Bartenschlager as a source of inspiration for the Nightwatches. Though Bartenschlager discusses the work in a romantic context and arrives at a nihilistic interpretation, his overall conclusions are surprisingly compatible with the author profile of Lichtenberg. He notes particularly Bonaventura's exceptional handling of quotes and references, which cause him to call the Nightwatches "a literary echo-gallery in which references and allusions--with and without indication of sources--abound." Accordingly, a particular trademark of the author is that "Shakespeare is not discussed or merely quoted, but integrated into the narrative perspective and functionalised creatively for the narration." As an example of this technique, the metonymic use of the

²⁵ Goethes Werke. Ed. by command of the Grand Duchess Sophia of Saxony (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1899), Vol. XXII, Wilhelm Meister, Book IV, Chap. xiii, pp. 73 ff.

three witches in Macbeth is given; they are evoked to describe the fearful apparitions disturbing the dignity of the freethinker's death in the Second Nightwatch. Bartenschlager comments: "After Bonaventura has chosen the analogy of the Macbeth-witches, associations seem to crowd in on him."²⁶ Lichtenberg was an avid advocate of associative thought, and he had studied David Hartley's theories in this field in some depth, as they were propagated by his friend Joseph Priestley.²⁷ Talking of himself in the third person, Lichtenberg vividly describes his habit of thinking in associations:

Before anyone can even recite the Lord's Prayer he can enumerate ten aspects [of a problem], his thoughts arrive as if brought to him by a hobgoblin. (D 120)

The full extent of these associations was always difficult to comprehend, as Lichtenberg's comprehensive knowledge exceeded that of most of his contemporaries, and it cannot easily be recovered

²⁶ Bartenschlager, p. 349, p. 353.

²⁷ David Hartley (1705-57) attributes the evolution of higher concepts to association of basic ideas. His Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations was published in 1749, but acquired a wider readership when Priestley edited and republished it in 1774 as Hartley's theory of the human mind on the principle of the association of ideas with essays relating to the subject of it. After his return from the second sojourn in England, Lichtenberg's Notebook E shows intensive reading of this work, E 453 ff.

now, when so much of the eighteenth-century epistemology is no longer generally accessible. But where it is possible to follow Lichtenberg's thoughts in some detail, their depth is shown to derive from the habitual comparing and super-imposing of various ideas, and by this method he manipulates common concepts to yield multifaceted meaning. Bonaventura masters the same technique, and it enables him to say much with an exceptional economy of words. The Macbeth-witches are a case in point.

On his nocturnal rounds Kreuzgang notices "three figures . . . creeping like carnival masks along the churchyard wall." Notwithstanding a hint of carnival, a sinister impression is created by a preceding flash of lightning as well as by the cemetery location, and the feeling of doom is confirmed when "the three had dissolved into the air like Macbeth's witches" (p. 39). Later "the air cast bubbles, and the three Macbeth ghosts were suddenly visible again, as if the storm wind had whirled them there by their pates. The lightning illuminated twisted devil's masks and snaky hair and the whole hellish contrivance" (pp. 41 and 43).

Paucity of invention can hardly account for the repetition of a metaphor by an author of Bonavenura's complexity, especially as the second passage

demonstrates that when he uses few words it is not for want of finding apt expressions. According to Boswell, Johnson said of Shakespeare's witches: "They are beings of his own creation; they are a compound of malignity and meanness, without any abilities."²⁸ These negative qualities characterize exactly the evil apparitions in the Nightwatches and their mixture of destructiveness and intellectual impotence. To consider such passages in tandem is like reading the text through a three-dimensional viewer: it yields a depth of perception which remains hidden from the unaided eye. Bonaventura uses the insights accumulated by Shakespeare and Johnson to gain access to an enlarged view of existence, but he directs the focus onto new and different aspects. This "strong perspectivism" is commended by Bartenschlager, who notices that only such Shakespearean motifs are used as are compatible with Kreuzgang's philosophy. Such emphasis is achieved by "selection, partial integration, contrasting, parody and various quite original variations."²⁹ All these devices unite to create new issues out of Shakespeare's plays in which, however, Hamlet is constantly discernible as the dominant voice.

²⁸ Boswell, p. 1017.

²⁹ Bartenschlager, p. 359.

Hermann Michel saw in this leitmotif a borrowing from Hamlet.³⁰ Bonaventura, however, does not lift ideas from other authors without thorough scrutiny; and during the process he transforms and revises what he has found. Consequently Kreuzgang does not quote Hamlet, but relives relevant aspects of his experience, and thus the references to Shakespeare are code-words which can be used to understand Kreuzgang's deeper motives and aims.

The information that Kreuzgang "was once playing Hamlet, as guest role, in a court theatre" (p.199) seems inconsistent with the casual aside that he also "limped by nature and did not have the best appearance" (p. 53). The role-playing should therefore be accepted on a higher level, where it can explain various of the nightwatchman's rather confusing characteristics, such as his intellectual and ineffectual reactions to evil, his self-analysing despair of the world and of his own indecisive helplessness, his dread of the unknown beyond the grave, his unsatisfied need to understand what is going on around him and what part he should take in the proceedings.

Kreuzgang's reactions to the ills of the world, or rather his lack of them, find their explanation in

³⁰ Michel, Einleitung, pp. xxviii-xxix.

Hamlet's words when these are taken in their entirety. The few hints and quotations in the text of the Nightwatches act merely as signposts to the fuller information which is contained in Shakespeare's works. Like the doomed Prince of Denmark, Kreuzgang is basically an idealist with a rational, sophisticated mind which perceives with uncompromising clarity the wrongs of the world. But at the same time his thoughtfulness prevents him from attempting any remedial action, for his exceptional intelligence recognizes clearly that the results of any human enterprise, however well meant and planned, are destined to elude human control. Hamlet's introspective anguish and emotional conflicts are therefore as much a part of the nightwatchman's nature as his consequent alienation from his fellow men, for they regard as madness what in truth is a form of higher, though frustrated and impotent wisdom.

Shakespeare furnishes rich examples of those types of madness which constitute extreme states of the human mind. This dimension of his work is highlighted when Kreuzgang is confined to the lunatic asylum, for he assumes the pseudonym Hamlet for an exchange of letters with the love of his life, who in turn has so intensely identified herself with the

role of Ophelia that she has assumed the name and gone mad herself. Unconventional love letters result and are presented in the Fourteenth Nightwatch. The unexpected change in genre baffled critics until Rita Terras found a correspondence between the structure of the Nightwatches and Juvenal, who employs the epistolary form in his Twelfth and Thirteenth Satire.³¹ In the tightly structured context of Kreuzgang's self-revelations, the parallel should be considered as an indication that the letters are to be read in a satirical, self-mocking context and that the world of Juvenal is never far from the author's mind.

A connection like this removes the love affair with a crazed actress in the lunatic asylum from grotesque melodrama to the menippean realm of a search for absolute truth and final meaning, while the names under which the correspondence is conducted alert the reader to interpret Bonavnetura with Shakespeare in mind. At the same time this role-playing reinforces a leitmotif of the menippean tradition, that the world is a stage on which everybody has been allotted a part without being given a choice in the selection. Shakespeare has varied this metaphor again and again; the best known

³¹ Rita Terras, p. 25.

version is delivered by Jaques, the fool in As You Like It, which Lichtenberg saw performed in London on October 18, 1775:

All the world's a stage,
And all men and women merely players;
They have their exits and entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts.
(Act II, Sc. VII)

Following this famed statement Jaques traces man's transformation from hopeful infant through youth and manhood to the "pantaloon," the fool, and finally to his "second childishness and mere oblivion/sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," thus paraphrasing the "nothing" with which Kreuzgang's own narration comes to an end.

The constant allusions to Shakespeare in the Nightwatches alert the reader to the nature of Kreuzgang's predicament. He is not wrestling with purely personal problems, but with questions which have agitated profound minds throughout history, and for which Shakespeare has found the most vivid and memorable, and at the same time generally accessible expression.

Kreuzgang approaches the quest freshly and with some new insights, notably from Kant's critical inquiries into the potential of the human mind, which are especially evoked in the exchange of letters with Ophelia. As such profound questions admit of no

definite responses, he cannot be expected to advance further than Shakespeare, and therefore follows Jaques' conclusions:

It is all role, the role itself and the playactor who is behind it, and in him in turn his thoughts and plans and enthusiasms and buffooneries--all belong to the moment and swiftly flee, like the word on the comedian's lips. (p. 209)

When he concludes his last letter: "Love me, in a word, without further pondering," (p. 211) the seeming flippancy reveals in fact the wisdom which recognizes love as the one experience by which man can transcend his isolation in space and time.³²

The epistolary interpolation in the Fourteenth Nightwatch provides one of the numerous examples of Bonaventura's virtuosity in blending ideas from the full range of sources from which Western civilisation drew its inspiration and strength. This creative approach to outstanding works of the intellect accords with the precepts of the enlightenment which Lichtenberg endeavoured to promote. To him the inevitable prerequisite for meaningful artistic

³² Cf. Eccl. IX, 9: "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun." Like Shakespeare's insights, those of Ecclesiastes also run consistently through the Nichtwatches.

achievement was familiarity with the views held by the great thinkers of all ages, combined with personal probing into the methods by which they arrived at their conclusions. These he wanted constantly tested, for he agreed with Johnson in the "Preface to Shakespeare"

What mankind have long possessed thy have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour.

Shakespeare, that "comprehensive genius" as Johnson calls him,³³ is constantly used in the Nightwatches as a touchstone with which Kreuzgang tests the validity of his own opinions.

Bartenschlager describes the work as somber, and as the most nihilistic prose work of the German Romantic Epoch, as well as that of the greatest genius.³⁴ Its romantic and despairing elements are, however, already present in Shakespeare, especially in those works which are quoted or alluded to by Kreuzgang, who knows and uses them in the assimilatory way which Lichtenberg recommended and practiced.

³³ Ed. Adams, "Preface to Shakespeare," pp. 329, 336.

³⁴ Bartenschlager, p. 347.

Most of the plays which are worked into the fabric of the Nightwatches were made memorable to Lichtenberg through the sensitive interpretations of Garrick, and he wrote about this experience: "To act like Garrick and to write like Shakespeare are the effects of very deep-seated causes." He elaborated this thought at various times, for he wanted to recommend the art of these men as an example to those idealistic young German writers who expected genius to inspire them as if they were possessed and without much effort on their part. He therefore stressed about Garrick:

Almost all the newer English authors, who are so much read, imitated, and aped by us, were his friends. He helped form them, while they in their turn helped to form him. Man was his study, from the cultured and artificial denizens of the salons of St. James, down to the savage creatures in the eating-houses of St. Giles. He attended the same school as Shakespeare, and like the latter, did not wait for inspiration, but worked hard (for in England all is not left to genius, but worked hard for); by this school I mean London, where a man with such a talent for observation can learn as much by experience in a year as in a whole lifetime spent in some little town, where all have the same hopes and fears, the same subjects for wonder and gossip and nothing is out of the ordinary.³⁵

As Lichtenberg shared the eighteenth-century belief that literature is the repository of man's accumulated wisdom, he regarded all its

³⁵ Ed. Mare, Lichtenberg's Visits to England, pp. 11, 8.

manifestations with seriousness. His certainty about the importance of literature turned him into one of the first and foremost who saw the inherent dangers in German idealism, which centered more and more on grand and sublime concepts and progressively lost touch with reality.

The literary controversies into which this attitude involved him vibrate through various parts of the Nightwatches, notably in the "Dithyramb on Spring" (p. 189), and in passages where the playwrights Iffland and Kotzebue are ridiculed. One such text follows directly on an exclamation in which Kreuzgang couples Hamlet's famous question "To be or not to be" with an invocation of the devil, showing that even when Bonaventura uses common expletives he remains conscious of literary precedent, for Shakespeare often uses the devil to indicate spontaneous or emphatic speech.

Hamlet, for instance, when reminded that his father died four months ago and that it is time to cease mourning, calls out: "Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables" (Act III, Sc. II). The effect of that single dark figure among colourful courtiers is vividly described by Lichtenberg. The stranger in black, the enigmatic "tall manly figure, wrapped in a cloak" who "strode

through the arch and stood on a grave stone" in the Fourth Nightwatch (p. 76), brings Hamlet to mind all the more, as Kreuzgang continues:

I always step before an alien unusual human life with the same feelings as before a curtain behind which a Shakespearean drama is to be produced; and I like it best if the former as well as the latter is a tragedy, for, besides genuine seriousness, I can suffer only tragic jest and such fools as in King Lear; precisely because these alone are truly audacious and carry on their clownery en gros, and without regard, over the whole of human life. (p. 67)

As Kreuzgang himself identifies with Hamlet, projection of that figure onto another character should be an indication that Kreuzgang sees himself, or part of himself, in the strangers he meets during his watch. He achieves the association by various means. When he introduces the poet he tells of having been just such a poet himself (p. 31), in other cases the connections are more circumspect. When he calls a vagrant, of whom nothing else is told but that he is dying in poverty and solitude, a Joseph, whom "the brothers have cast out," it must be remembered that Kreuzgang sees himself as such a Joseph figure, spurned by others for the superior qualities of his intellect. He watches as this pathetic "beggar with neither house nor home fights against slumber, which wants to lay him so sweetly and enticingly in death's arms," and his fear of consequences prevents him from interference. It is

then that he repeats Hamlet's question: "Shall I cheat death of a beggarly life? By the devil, I really do not know what is better--to be or not to be!" (p. 159). Hamlet, in the same predicament decided for life, because he feared that existence after death might be worse. Kreuzgang elected to let the beggar die, for "the brothers are not worthy that Joseph walk among them!--Let him sleep away." With Hamlet's situation in mind, his judgement would indicate at least a strong hope for a better existence after death, though like Hamlet, Kreuzgang cannot be absolutely sure and thus leaves the question open.

Such associations abound in the text, but they are not revealed at first sight or by casual reading, just as it is not likely that the beginning of the Nightwatches will immediately be identified with the first scene of Hamlet. Yet in both works a nightwatch establishes the dark and sombre mood in which the plot is to unfold, in both a watchman starts his round of duty, and a ghost is almost instantly mentioned.

Kreuzgang introduces spectres in a seemingly irrelevant aside, remarking that he has protected himself "against the evil spirits with the sign of the cross" (p. 29). Lichtenberg shared an interest

in superstitious beliefs with other thinkers of his age, such as Johnson, who also wanted to fathom ideas which persist so universally notwithstanding their seeming irrationality. The question of whether ghosts can and do exist falls also into this category and exercised especially Johnson's mind. Lichtenberg himself was mainly interested, when he saw the ghost of Hamlet's father in London, by what means Garrick created awe and terror and left his audience with a lasting impression of fright.

He shares this memorable event in his "Second Letter from England," where he reports that while the ghost "stands motionless," the fear which it exudes is reflected and magnified by Garrick's reaction. This he describes in minute detail, concluding:

His whole demeanour is so expressive of terror that it made my flesh creep even before he began to speak. The almost terror-struck silence of the audience, which preceded his appearance and filled one with a sense of insecurity, probably did much to enhance this effect.³⁶

Lichtenberg emphasized in his writings consistently that he venerated Shakespeare as one of the greatest masters of language and as an unsurpassed observer of the hidden springs of human behaviour, and that he considered this combination indispensable in the study of man. His "Letters from

³⁶ Ed. Mare, Lichtenberg's Visits to England, p. 10.

England" pay special tribute to the great English dramatist, and at the same time they demonstrate, how seriously Lichtenberg took his own precept that intellectual gains can only be expected when the best that is available has been absorbed, and then is integrated into new thought patterns. His voluminous writings and letters show that references to Shakespeare were part of his normal system of thinking, and that he used them habitually to test his own conclusions about life. He practised and recommended this method years before the superb translations of Schlegel and Tieck turned Shakespeare into one of the best loved authors in Germany. Tieck and the brothers Schlegel, incidentally, had been students in Göttingen and were known to Lichtenberg personally.

After their masterful translations became available and Wilhelm Meister had set the tone, quotations from Shakespeare and allusions to his works became common practice for educated Germans. Imaginative variations of his thoughts, however, and creative use of his language and ideas, still remain a rarity. Lichtenberg and Bonaventura are outstanding exceptions.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM HOGARTH (1697-1764) AND VISUAL CONCEPTS IN THE NIGHTWATCHES.

While Shakespearian allusions are the most immediate signs of English influences in the Nightwatches, references to Hogarth and his serio-comic subjects are also particularly noticeable. These merit special attention in the search for the author, as well as for the meaning and intent of the Nightwatches, for this English master of the pictorial moral satire figures much less frequently in German literature than Shakespeare. Writers who valued Hogarth for his insights into human nature rather than for his wit and dramatic subject matter are rarer still. In England it was mainly Fielding who acknowledged Hogarth's keen observations of human nature and his didactic intentions, and he paid repeated homage to these gifts in all his three major novels. His exclamation in Tom Jones after the escape of Sophia, "O Shakespeare, had I thy pen! O Hogarth had I thy pencil!" (X,viii), shows the high regard for the artist which Lichtenberg tried to communicate in his commentaries on Hogarth's prints.

William Hogarth (1697-1764) was the first English painter to gain international acclaim. That he is increasingly recognized as a key interpreter of the English eighteenth century life, is demonstrated by the growing habit of illustrating books from and about this era with his works. These were promoted in Germany already during his lifetime by the efforts of Lessing and his cousin Christlob Mylius, who had obtained the collaboration of the artist himself in his translation of Hogarth's aesthetic treatise The Analysis of Beauty (1753). The German version appeared only a year after publication in London.

In an age when fluent elegance in writing had become a widespread accomplishment, Hogarth's clumsy, awkward prose failed to arouse the response which he had expected for his theories on art. While this handicap was removed in the German rendering, the Zergliederung der Schönheit nevertheless attracted little notice. Only gradually were some of its ideas accepted and integrated, especially his concept of the line of perfect beauty as a wave, because nature does not know any straight lines. The idea was later adopted by Friedrich Schlegel as a guideline to writing, when he recommended the Arabesque as pattern for the construction of novels. Wolfgang Paulsen suggests, therefore, that the structure of the

Nightwatches follows the wavy line of narration as demanded by Schlegel, and put into practice in his own novel Lucinde (1799).¹

Kreuzgang uses the same argument with which Hogarth commended his wave-like line of beauty, for he refers repeatedly to nature and real life when he justifies his narrative techniques. He uses the metaphor of an undulating river for his digressive and convoluted scheme of narration: "my story...like a narrow stream, winds through the rocky and sylvan passages which I heaped all around" (p.199).² Lichtenberg already recommended this mode of writing in 1770 when he remarked that he regarded this undulatory technique the most suitable, long before he knew about Hogarth's line of beauty or Sterne's method en Ziczac (B 131). This remark is characteristically preceded by thoughts on how the zigzag path can be transposed from artistic convention to real life, for Lichtenberg was always anxious to apply the lessons of art and literature to reality. Preoccupied with the sequence of birth, life and death, he proposes that the path between the two unalterable points of beginning and end can be

¹ Paulsen, Nachwort, pp. 163-80, pp. 178-79.

² The German translation for Hogarth's "Line of Beauty" is Schlangenlinie. Bonaventura uses the verb schlängeln, thus providing the link with Hogarth.

elongated if they are not connected by a straight and single minded approach, but rather by a meandering effort of crowding as much varied experience between them as possible (B 129).

Though most of Lichtenberg's aphorisms were only published after his death, he shared his ideas freely during his lectures and discussions. The brothers Schlegel were among his students, as was Ludwig Tieck. They were all personally known to him, and how far their romanticism was shaped by the prevailing attitude of the late enlightenment in Göttingen, of which Lichtenberg was the most visible exponent, has yet to be investigated in depth.

While Hogarth's treatise on beauty in art was largely neglected, the German imagination instead was captured by the Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst which Johann Joachim Winckelmann published in 1755. This work stimulated almost immediately widespread interest in the visual arts and their classic models, and presented Greek sculpture as the ideal of unsurpassable perfection. Greece itself was not readily accessible to the normal traveller at the time, so Rome became the focal point of desire for German intellectuals, and it remained so during the

romantic period and until the expressionists re-orientated aspiring artists to Paris.

Automatic and often mindless veneration of classical works soon became fashionable as a result of Winckelmann's immense impact on German aesthetics. Kreuzgang ridicules this attitude in the episode of the "invalids' home of immortal gods and heroes, given shape amid a miserable humanity" (p. 193). He warns "a little dilettante" whom he finds worshipping "a Medici Venus without arms . . . 'The divine backside is too elevated for you, and you cannot get up there, considering your puny stature, without breaking your neck!'" He thus paraphrases and parabolizes a concern which no longer worried the romantics, who had substituted the national for the classical past, but which exercised Lichtenberg, who opposed all conventional adulation, and proposed that great men should not be imitated in their works, but rather in the efforts and attitudes which resulted in their outstanding achievements.

Kreuzgang endorses this opinion and his earthy, often irreverent satire is steeped in the realism of which Hogarth was the greatest visual master of his age. While Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), who created the fashion for physiognomy, presented only selected specimens of Hogarth's art, which emphasized

deformed characters and depravity, Lichtenberg was always anxious--in literature, art and life--to consider all available aspects of a personality. His Commentaries on Hogarth have been largely ignored or dismissed by art critics, because they are concerned neither with Hogarth's painting techniques nor with aesthetics. Frederick Antal, interested in Hogarth's place in the history of ideas rather than in his influence on the development of painting, appreciates Lichtenberg's commentaries as a major contribution to the understanding of Hogarth's importance, as of his time. Antal acclaims the Göttingen professor as one of the foremost German experts on England, and as one of the most active mediators between the two cultures, and he calls him

the outstanding exponent and greatest connoisseur of English thought in Germany. Politically, too, he favoured the English constitution . . . No foreigner knew England . . . more thoroughly, whether her court or her lower classes, her literature, theatre, art, philosophy or science. Nothing was more congenial to his rationalism and empiricism than the realism of English art and literature.³

Antal correctly implies that Lichtenberg, unlike so many of his contemporaries who also admired English achievements, did not copy English examples, but accepted from them what was congenial and in

³ Frederick Antal, Hogarth and his Place in European Art (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), pp. 206-207.

accordance with his own philosophy. What he admired in Hogarth was the gift for didactic satire, a positive realism which did not shrink from degradation but always left hope for improvement, and the unsurpassed genius to reveal in a single visual moment the true character of his figures, their past and even their possibilities for the future.

Besides Lichtenberg it is Jean Paul (1763-1825) who among German writers most frequently refers to Hogarth. His "Preface" to E. T. A. Hoffmann's Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier was written in 1813, and shows that he appreciated the influence of Hogarth's engravings on literature. But he sees them as "poetische Zerrbilder," poetical caricatures, and places their worth below the work of Callot.⁴ This French artist commanded indeed a much wider range of subjects than Hogarth, but in his dramatic scenes the single human being appears submerged into the mass of suffering or agitated mankind. Hogarth's particular gift, to strip the individual of all conventional masks, is ignored in Jean Paul's evaluation.

This is the quality in Hogarth which Fielding and Lichtenberg most admired. Bonaventura recognizes

⁴ E. T. A. Hoffmanns Werke. Ed. Georg Ellinger, 1st ed. (Berlin: Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong & Co., n.d.), p. 16.

it, too, and uses it to illustrate his own observations. He refers directly to Hogarth three times, and shows his exceptional familiarity with his world by using the name always attributively. In the Seventh Nightwatch, where Kreuzgang recalls being delivered to the madhouse for his satires on "killings of the soul by church and state," the court consisted of "half a dozen men with juridical masks before their countenance, under which they concealed their own scoundrel's physiognomy and the other half of their Hogarth face." He goes on to claim that "they understand the art of Rubens, with which he transformed a laughing face into a weeping one by means of a single stroke" (p. 119 and 121), thus demonstrating not only considerable knowledge in the field of painting, but also determination to apply it to life and literature.

The reference to "the other half of their Hogarth face" presupposes unusual familiarity with Hogarth's heads, especially as it does not apply to the etching which would most easily suggest itself in the circumstances, The Bench, an assembly of judges of which Hogarth drew several versions. Horst Fleig found the correct source of the allusion in Lichtenberg's commentary to A Midnight Modern Conversation, a print of which Hogarth engraved the

first version in 1733. In his almanac of 1786 Lichtenberg had already dealt with this popular scene which became known in Germany as the Punschgesellschaft, and when he began in 1794 to publish more detailed commentaries, he chose as his second subject for explanation the same print once again.

In describing a prominent figure seated centrally behind the table, Lichtenberg interprets the drunk as a representative of the jus utrumque,⁵ and satirically twists this legal term into denoting the two sides of law: justice and injustice. Ingeniously, and with the help of several other word plays, he demonstrates that the drowsy asymmetrical face represents these two opposed aspects, with the left, or sinister side illustrating the law.⁶ Fleig detected this source for Kreuzgang's metaphor, because his candidate for Bonaventura, August Klingemann, alluded to it in a theatrical review of 1807.

Fleig draws explicit attention to the influence on the Nightwatches of the Hogarth-Lichtenberg volumes on which Klingemann wrote an article in 1804.

⁵ Jus utrumque: the canonical and the secular (Roman) law in German legal parlance.

⁶ Promies, Vol. III, p. 693.

Reinforcing the parallels which had already been noted (for instance by Gillespie) between Lichtenberg's commentary on The Rake's Progress and the mad-house scenes in the Ninth Nightwatch, Fleig draws attention to the metaphor of microcosm which is used in both cases for the lunatic asylum, while the world at large is called the macrocosm. He also points out correspondences between the Eighth and Ninth Nightwatches and the last two prints of the Rake's Progress.⁷

Commenting on Kreuzgang's habit of describing events as if he had visualized them in a painting or in woodcuts, Fleig locates the link in Lichtenberg's Commentaries. He touches, however, only lightly on Kreuzgang's references to Hogarth's Finis or Tailpiece, and consequently concludes that the Hogarth-Lichtenberg model applies only in a limited sense.⁸

Hogarth's Tailpiece is twice mentioned in the Nightwatches. It is used for literary satire on Kotzebue when Kreuzgang suggests that "time could fire the last pipe it smokes here with a scene from his last drama and, thus inspired, pass over to

⁷ Fleig, Literarischer Vampirismus, pp. 90-91, 71, 99, and 97.

⁸ Fleig, Literarischer Vampirismus, pp. 72-73, 71, and 75.

eternity!" (p. 71). August von Kotzebue (1761-1819), a prolific, successful but shallow dramatist who also churned out satires, tales and historical works, though mentioned five times by name in the Nightwatches, does not immediately seem predestined for presence at such a solemn moment. He had, however, crudely satirized Lichtenberg and his relationship to Maria Dorothea Stechard in a play Doktor Bahrdr mit der eisernen Stirn. The girl died barely aged seventeen before Lichtenberg could marry her. He was heartbroken and expressed repeatedly bitter resentment towards Kotzebue (e.g. J 794, 847, 867, 872, 873, 1231).

A coded reference to Hogarth's Finis may be Ophelia's declaration that as she cannot escape her role she will read it to the very end--the exeunt omnes--behind which the actual "I" will probably begin (p. 213). The Latin stage direction accords perfectly with the theatre background to the letters in the Fourteenth Nightwatch, but Lichtenberg mentions in his almanac article that the words are visible in a book of comedies which Hogarth shows among the broken debris of his last engraving among other emblems of finality.⁹

⁹ Lichtenberg, Goettinger Taschenkalender für das Jahr 1791. "II) Finis", pp. 206-210, p. 207.

The Tailpiece is named the second time in the Sixteenth Nightwatch, where its introduction into the opening sentence leaves no doubt that this chapter was intended by the author as the last and final one.

Kreuzgang starts

I wish my brush could complete this ultimatum and Hogarthian tail-piece quite distinctly before every man's eyes; unfortunately, however, the colours needed are lacking in the night, and I can make nothing but shadows and airy nebulosities flit before the lens of my magic lantern. (p. 229)

While everything will now come to an end, life itself is experienced as a darkness in which man sees but indistinctly, and the lens of Kreuzgang's magic lantern paraphrases Paul's metaphor: "Now we see through a glass darkly . . . " (1 Cor. XIII, 12).

In both cases life is experienced as a penumbral condition, "nothing but shadows," and it is merely lack of illumination which prevents man from perceiving the higher reality which is all around him. The nightwatches are thus but a metaphor for groping in a darkness so somnolent that most people fall asleep and refuse active participation, and even the alert and ever awake watchman cannot expect to see clearly and distinctly. Yet the effort is important, for by asserting that while on earth "man, that Oedipus, progress only as far as blindness, but not in a second plot to transfiguration" (p. 143),

Kreuzgang affirms belief in a continuity of existence after death.

The Tailpiece occupies a unique position in Hogarth's work. Lichtenberg acquired from the artist's widow in London the very copy on which Hogarth expended his last efforts. An article in his almanac of 1791 is dedicated to print under its most common title Finis, and Lichtenberg had the engraving reproduced in its entirety in spite of the small pocket-book format of his publication. He informs his readers that Hogarth announced a few months before his death in lighthearted company that his next work would show the end of everything on earth. During the ensuing surprise and banter one friend pointed out in fun that this would of necessity include the artist himself. Hogarth affirmed this with a deep sigh and told his friends that the sooner the end would come for him, the better.

Hogarth engraved both the word "Finis" in large and legible letters on smoke exhaled by the enfeebled Father Time, and the title, The Bathos, or Manner of Sinking in Sublime Paintings, under the scene which he crammed with emblems of death and decay. In its total metonymy Finis evokes Hogarth's early beginning as an engraver of emblematic devices. There is no sense of hope or humor, and as other

critics Lichtenberg missed Hogarth's usual intellectual level, though he detected a spark of customary inventiveness in the darkly negative message of the gallows, the only object that remains erect in a scene of utter desolation and disintegration.¹⁰

Hogarth's fame as an interpreter of his age was achieved through passionate involvement with the important concerns of his time. Lichtenberg always propagated such an attitude as prerequisite to intellectual stature, and Antal recognizes this spiritual kinship by calling Lichtenberg's "consuming interest in mankind--as consuming as Hogarth's."¹¹

Hogarth was actively involved in most of the major concerns of his epoch, and Ronald Paulson regards it as one of the central facts of his life "that he was connected in some way with almost all the great philanthropies and humanitarian projects of his time--from the parliamentary committee on prison reform of 1729 to the Foundling Hospital, from St. Bartholomew's Hospital to the London [hospital] and the Bethlehem [Bedlam]. One cannot dissociate this obvious interest and involvement from the theme that

¹⁰ "II) Finis," pp. 206, 208.

¹¹ Antal, p. 207.

runs through his engraved works."¹² He was equally abreast of literary and critical developments, for he was in constant demand to illustrate some of the most influential English authors of his century, such as Swift, Pope, Fielding and Sterne, and from his keen perception of their achievement developed personal bonds of esteem and friendship, especially with Henry Fielding.¹³ Thus he gave a title to his ultimate work which links it so obviously with Peri Bathous or the Art of Sinking in Poetry, a literary satire from the Scriblerus Club, published under the pseudonym Martinus Scriblerus, the learned dunce whose lavish praise is meant as condemnation.

This satire on shallow and pretentious writing is attributed mainly to Pope. It proceeds through brilliant manipulation of words and their double meaning to equate bathos, or the profound, with the low and therefore common, in art, which is satirically recommended as being most readily understood and thus most in demand. Chapter XIII deals with "A Project for the Advancement of the Bathos" and recommends "a Rhetorical Chest of

¹² Ronald Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times. 2 Vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), Vol. II, p. 35.

¹³ See R. E. Moore, Hogarth's Literary Relationships (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1948.

Drawers" into which tropes and similes from all times should be collected, while "every Composer will soon be taught the Use of this Cabinet, and how to manage all the Registers of it, which will be drawn out much in the Manner of those in an Organ."¹⁴

Hogarth followed Pope's advice and heaped around the expiring Father Time every conceivable symbol of death and decline, but by drawing attention to his source of inspiration, he provided a ludicrous perspective on a scene which is otherwise noticeably lacking in light touches. The comic relief which he usually adds freely to his tragic scenes is in this last instance only provided by the incongruity of a satiric title and the tragic content. This technique of abrupt juxtaposition of extremes is disturbing to the reader and viewer. Some of Bonaventura's most perturbing passages rely on the same method.

Ronald Paulson sees in the subject of this last print "the whole world regarded tragically when it is of course only comic,"¹⁵ but Antal also notes that in his ultimate work Hogarth "mocks at painting in the grand style, even if in his customary ambiguous way, and pokes fun at the trivial objects it sometimes

¹⁴ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, pp. 428-29.

¹⁵ Ed. Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times, p. 408.

depicts."¹⁶ Awareness of the comic undercurrents within the unremittingly sombre scene is strongly expressed in both critical appraisals. In establishing the Tailpiece as the point of reference for his ultimate nightwatch, Bonaventura reminds his readers of the stoical and creative way in which Hogarth awaited his death, and exhorts them to use this last work as a visual aid and complement to his own final statements. At the same time, he follows Hogarth's method of revealing his sources and thereby introduces not only a distancing device, but also a burlesque element into the grief and bewilderment aroused by the knowledge of certain death.

The universality of this despair is demonstrated by the number and long tradition of the emblems for the end of all things which Hogarth has assembled. Bonaventura matches these by the many references to mankind's dread of death and the human impotence to penetrate with rational means beyond it. In both cases, puns and allusions are used to create the mood of inescapability and inevitability, and their prevalence reveals a pattern of deliberate intent.

Hogarth's skill in working with allusions and puns is well recognized, and Paulson describes his last work as punning "on a scale unprecedented even

¹⁶ Antal, pp. 167-68.

in his work."¹⁷ Bartenschlager observes a similar concentration of coded cues when he calls the Nightwatches "a literary echo gallery."¹⁸

Hogarth's integration into Bonaventura's narration is no less thorough and organic than that of Shakespeare, and many other Hogarthian touches can be discerned besides those which have already been noted by critics. The poor poet, whose towering aspirations contrast ludicrously with the demeaning restrictions imposed on him by his poverty, is another figure which connects the world of Kreuzgang to that of Hogarth. In his Distressed Poet (1736) Hogarth was one of the first to highlight through art the plight of the unsuccessful idealist who has to subsist in a garret while planning to improve the universe. Notes scattered all over the floor testify to his disconsolateness, and at the same time reveal the direction in which his thoughts are taking wing. A drawn sword hints at thoughts of suicide. A famished dog (not mice as in the Eighth Nightwatch, p.129) gnaws on a book, symbol for the highest achievement a writer can attain. The painting, Antal

¹⁷ Ed. Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times, p. 409.

¹⁸ Bartenschlager, p. 349.

suggests, may have been inspired by Henry Fielding's Author's Farce (1730).¹⁹

Lichtenberg discussed the Distressed Poet in his almanac of 1790, where he added the subtitle "Der Dichter in der Noth"--the poet in need/despair. A suicide who hanged himself in a garret was shown by Hogarth in his Gin Lane (1751). An almanac article of 1795 deals with this and its companion print Beer Street.

When Lichtenberg began his more elaborate separate commentaries in 1794, he started the new series with Strolling Actresses dressing in a Barn (1738).²⁰ The exuberance of emblematic detail in this print lends itself particularly well to sophisticated interpretation, and therefore it had already been selected as one of the subjects for the first of Lichtenberg's Hogarth articles in 1784. The incongruity of the poetic imagination in the face of a humbling reality is once again the general topic of the satire.

A company of strolling players is shown in the squalor of a barn preparing themselves for their stage appearance as queens and goddesses. An actor, dressed as deus ex machina, hangs his socks for

¹⁹ Antal, p. 102.

²⁰ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 669-88.

drying on the theatrical thunderclouds, a detail echoed when the marionette theater director in the Fifteenth Nightwatch hangs himself on stage from a cloud (p. 227). Each object is an integral part of the scene and at the same time an emblem, and every gesture and action is loaded with actual as well as symbolic meaning. Hogarth offers a hilarious view of life behind the curtains, and at the same time a theater-metaphor that unmasks the pretensions and the tragedy of life.

Lichtenberg starts his exposition with the question, why men are present when the artist calls his work Strolling Actresses, and he concludes that from Hogarth significance must always be expected, most of all in his choice of titles. Lichtenberg uses all available clues--theatre bills strewn on the floor between broken eggs, a chamber pot and a discarded pair of breeches, and an Act of Parliament against strolling players (1737) prominently deposited next to another chamber pot near an emperor's crown--to detect in the crowded scene a coded call of defiance by the spirited women against the parliamentary suppression of their art. Thus a comical, lively scene contains a universal parable of life, but on another level presents a particular

dilemma to which Hogarth wants to draw special attention.²¹

Such subtle, multi-layered satire, and the art of fusing several messages together delighted Lichtenberg, who was himself a master of suggesting implications with the fewest possible words. So is Bonaventura, who adds to his impressive display of theatre-metaphors when he has his Clown declare in the Prologue:

What is the point of seriousness anyway? Man is a facetious animal by birth, and he merely acts on a larger stage than do the actors on the small one inserted into this big one as in Hamlet; however importantly he may want to take things, in the wings he must still put off crown, sceptre and theatrical dagger and creep into his little dark chamber as an exited comedian, until it pleases the director to announce a new comedy. (p. 139)²²

Thus the Clown sums up in a nutshell Hogarth's parable of the strolling actresses as interpreted by Lichtenberg.

Placing the crown next to the chamber pot is a typical Hogarthian ploy. While Lichtenberg particularly admired these touches, Goethe spoke for most educated Germans when he found fault with such crude naturalism. Moore points out that Fielding,

²¹ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 669-71.

²² The reference to "a new comedy" is one of the many indications that Kreuzgang expects existence after death.

like Hogarth, met with similar objections in England, for he "refused to idealize his characters, thus to most contemporaries they were 'low.'"²³ The Nightwatches stand in the same tradition and have still to contend with criticism of their deliberate menippean mixture of the coarse and ludicrous with the sublime.

The theater perspective is also used in the illustrations for a new edition of The New Metamorphosis (first published 1708), one of the first commissions with which Hogarth was entrusted. The work is an opportunistic adaptation of Apuleius' Golden Ass by Charles Gildon (1665-1724), an English writer now mainly remembered through Pope's disparaging mention of him in the Dunciad. Gildon added considerable spice to the classic tale by transforming his protagonist not into an ass, but rather a Bolognese lap dog, an animal with considerably better opportunities to observe human frailties at close quarters. The racy interludes which he introduced were mainly of the Decameron kind. Most of the serious concerns which distinguish The Golden Ass by Apuleius were thereby lost; but Gildon tried to preserve some vestige of symbolic significance by treating his main characters

²³ Moore, p. 157.

allegorically. The protagonist is therefore turned into Fantasio, a permanent child in appearance but a man in mind and deed, while his mother is Donna Musa des Intentiones.

The second edition in 1724 was illustrated by the comparatively inexperienced and unknown Hogarth, and unlike his later practice he simply supplied mostly reissues of already existing plates.²⁴ The frontispiece shows two asses accompanying Apuleius and Lucian, the classic masters of the menippea, and the originators of the plot. Two satyrs support the four figures, thereby advertising The New Metamorphosis as a satire. These six figures foreground a scene from Gildon's tale. Hogarth added only minor but significant details: a church which represents the spiritual dimension required of the menippea, and a curtain through which a view of the action can be gained, a visible expression of the satirical contention that life is but a stage play.

From the original, Gildon retained the long tale of Amor and Psyche, one of the earliest digressions in menippean literature, and the most popular of them all. It has no other connection with the main story than that it is recounted to comfort and encourage a

²⁴ Ronald Paulson, Hogarth's Graphic Works. 1st compl. ed. rev. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). Vol. II, Nr. 38, Cat. Nos. 35 ff.

damsel in distress, but it suggests lofty spiritual dimensions behind the tragic-comic trials and tribulations of the main plot.

The Fourth Plate in this series (Nr. 41, Cat. Nr. 38) is of special interest in connection with the Nightwatches. It is the only one which Hogarth added himself, and it could almost pass for an illustration of the moment in the Nightwatches where the alchemist shoemaker finds the coffer containing a child instead of the expected treasure. Hogarth's infant is fully dressed, and the scene, instead of crossroads, is a dilapidated room in a desolate castle to which the dwarf Fantasio had been forced to flee, hidden in a trunk. Of the three persons present, the servant who accompanied the boy corresponds to the shoemaker, especially as he stands near a tripod which Hogarth added--just like Bonaventura--to introduce a touch of the supernatural (p. 65). The mistress of the ruin can be described in the very words which Kreuzgang uses for his gypsy mother, a "great gigantic figure," (p. 233) "with shaggy hair tousled about her forehead" (p. 61). In Gildon's Metamorphosis she is the witch Invidosa, and the little refugee who seeks her protection is horror-struck when he finds that she expects him to become her lover. In his reluctant embrace she changes, however, into a

beautiful young girl, and a passionate love affair with a tragic ending ensues.

Gildon's enchantress is thus a variation of the mythical demons who personify the human passions which afford a vision of never ending bliss, but lead to loneliness and death. Her affinity to Kreuzgang's gypsy mother illuminates the allegorical significance of his ill-assorted parents, and the human dichotomy which they symbolize.

A woman very much like that appeared to Lichtenberg in the last dream he found significant enough to record. This occurred during the night of February 9th to 10th in the month of his death, and concerns a strange and seemingly senseless encounter in a country pub where people played dice. A "tall bony woman" sat nearby and knitted, reminiscent of the goulsh female-spectators around the guillotine, who counted their stitches together with the heads that rolled. When the dreamer asked her what could be won in the dice game, she answered "Nothing," and the encounter ends on this single word as tantalisingly as the Nightwatches, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions (L 707). While such a woman represents irrational and subconscious traits, the spiritual side of humanity with its intellectual demands and unfulfillable striving towards

perfection, as symbolised by gold, is represented by the alchemist father.

The pain and pressure exerted by the incompatibility of such extremes in human nature is expressed by Bonaventura with the emblematic skill of Hogarth by a term from genetics, lex cruciata (p. 111). While this indicates the biological law of crossbreeding, the expression could also be translated as the rule that life equals agonizing suffering.

The child seen on the Third Woodcut (p. 63) is as yet undisturbed by conflicting passions. The dichotomy of body and soul is, however, already apparent as symbolized by the particular racy Shrovetide plays of the shoemaker and mastersinger Hans Sachs (1494-1576), on which the infant Kreuzgang sits, and the book from which he feeds his mind, Böhme's Aurora. The body position emphasizes the split in human personality once more by assigning the books to his upper and lower regions, and by allowing him close contact with the earthy artisan poet, while access to the mystic speculations of Böhme is attained through the windows of the soul, the eyes.

Bonaventura uses paintings to establish emblems and allegories in Hogarth's manner, and to compress his narration, while at the same time activating the

reader's imagination and participation. For this reason the early years of the poor poet are also explained through a painting, which supplies instant information about a happy and loved childhood (p. 131). Numerous phrases and metaphors witness to Bonaventura's habitual pictorial thinking.

Lichtenberg's interest in the visual arts was intense, for he regarded them as a prime repository for the development, change and dispersal of ideas. His knowledge of the great works of art was extensive, and he was especially well placed while in London as guest of the King and of many great houses to acquaint himself with great works, as well as with the critical theories about them. He left a record of many artists and celebrated works which he saw during his second visit to England, and mentions among others an impressive head of the blind Homer.²⁵ When his passionately desired project of visiting Rome came to nothing, Lichtenberg communicated his keen disappointment to Johann Gottwert Müller in the self-satirizing form of an abbreviated tragedy, where he condenses his frustrated hopes and interest into acts. "In the second act," he reports, "Laokoon made

²⁵ See Lichtenberg in England, ed. Gumbert, Vol. I, p. 106. Homer's Head from the collection of Dr. Mead as illustration of the many classical sculptures which Lichtenberg saw in England.

his appearance, the Apollo of Belvedere and the Medici Venus in Florence; all walls were covered with Raphaels and Corregios."²⁶

Every one of these highlights in Lichtenberg's vision of Italy is mentioned by Bonaventura. He has integrated the visual arts into his tale in a truly original manner, but in the didactic spirit of the enlightenment, as expressed by Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745) in his Theory of Painting (1715), according to whom they should be "esteemed not only as an enjoyment, but as another language, which completes the whole art of communicating our thoughts." Richardson sees painting as a means of passing on information, and he formulates the attitude of the enlightenment when he claims:

The great and chief ends of painting are to raise and improve nature; and to communicate ideas; not only those which we may receive

²⁶ Promies IV, 1784, p. 593.

Bonaventura uses Correggio's Nativity to illustrate the symbolic meaning of light at the death of the freethinker. "It is the double illumination in the Correggio night and fuses the earthly and heavenly ray into one marvellous splendour" (p. 33). That "the splendour radiating from the figure of Christ throws light all around," and that "mortal eyes cannot bear" such "rays of supernatural light" was already noticed by Giorgio Vasari, The Lives of the Artists (1550 and 1568), sel. and tr. George Bull, New York: Penguin Books, (1965) 1977 p. 281.

Following Vasari many later critics commented on this dual source of light, among them Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Discourses (1769-90), and long before him Jonathan Richardson in his Theory of Painting (1715).

otherwise, but such as without this art could not possibly be communicated; whereby mankind is advanced higher in the rational state, and made better; and that in a way easy, expeditious, and delightful.²⁷

He also refers to it as "this hieroglyphic language [that] completes what words or writing began and sculpture carried on, and thus perfects all that human nature is capable of in the communication of ideas, till we arrive at a more angelical and spiritual state in another world." Bonaventura has developed this idea to include music, "the mystic hieroglyph (93)," which bridges the gap between intellectual and emotional understanding. "It is the first sweet sound of the distant beyond, and the muse of song is the mystical sister who points the ways to heaven" (p. 37). Lessing based several of his theories on the relation between writing and the visual arts on Richardson's works. Sometimes he even used the same examples, for instance Timanthes' technique which so impressed Bonaventura (p. 197) of conveying inexpressible grief by shrouding the face.²⁸ Lessing's opinion that Timanthes refrained from displaying his artistic brilliance out of

²⁷ Jonathan Richardson, Works (1773; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969), p.247. The facsimile is reproduced from a copy in the possession of the Library of the University of Göttingen.

²⁸ Richardson, pp. 21, 256 and p. 52.

compassion with suffering, and that he veiled the grief that could not be alleviated, has to be taken into account when Kreuzgang's reactions to the misfortunes of others are assessed.²⁹

Laokoon pleads for artistic restraint not only out of compassion, but also from aesthetic consideration. Lessing admits of but one exception to this rule: when starvation is the subject. His paradigm is Ugolino from Dante's Inferno, Canto XXX, and Ugolino is also shown in the extremities of his plight in the Nightwatches (p. 133).

As Bonaventura deviates in some details from Dante's description, it is generally assumed that his source must have been the drama Ugolino (1768) by Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg (1737-1823). It is not known whether Lichtenberg knew this tragedy, though he was familiar with Gerstenberg with whom he became acquainted as editor of the Göttingische

²⁹ Lessing, Vol. XI, "Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet: eine Untersuchung," (1769), pp. 3-55. Lessing arrives here at the conclusion that the youthful genii with inverted torches on antique sarcophaguses are personifications of death. From this he deduced that death was not experienced as gruesome in classical times, an opinion which he finds reinforced by the conception of Sleep and Death as twin brothers (p. 11). Vol. IX, "Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie." 1. Teil 1766, pp. 16-17.

Magazin.³⁰ But on his second sojourn in England he made a special note of two prints, one of them being an Ugolino painted by West and engraved by Green.³¹

George III had appointed the American Benjamin West in 1772 as court painter. Lichtenberg's references to him must therefore be taken seriously, though the Ugolino print could not be located in the collections of the British Museum or of Her Majesty the Queen, and it is not included in The Paintings of Benjamin West by H. v. Erffa and A. Staley.³²

This episode from the Inferno was a popular topic for painters at the time, for the example of Ugolino had been chosen by the Richardson to advance his own contention that painting is superior to all the other arts. Arranging history, poetry, sculpture and painting in ascending order, he bases his argument, somewhat ingeniously, on the judgment that Dante improved considerably on the account of the Florentine historian Vallani. A bas-relief wrongly attributed to Michelangelo was appraised by Richardson as surpassing both of them, and he

³⁰ Promies, Vol. III, p. 395, No. 269: Letter to Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, 1780.

³¹ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 37.

³² Helmut v. Erffa and Allen Staley, The Paintings of Benjamin West (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1986.

clenches his proof by claiming "could we see the same story painted by the same great master, it will be easily conceived that his must carry the matter still farther." Therefore: "painting compleats [sic] and perfects . . . this is the utmost limit of human power in the communication of ideas." ³³

Richardson, a fashionable though undistinguished artist, was a discerning art critic. As friend of Pope, Gay and Prior, he was sensitized to the intellectual currents of his time, and his Theory of Painting was the first important work on aesthetic theory by an English author. Lessing was influenced by a French translation, and used and refined many of his ideas. Richardson advocated interest in art as a way of improving perception and manners, and his view of painting was that it should serve to raise and improve nature, and above all to communicate ideas. This concept, especially regarding the dissemination of ideas, was accepted by Lessing and Lichtenberg, as by all art critics of the enlightenment. Bonaventura also accepts Richardson's claim that "painting has another advantage over words; and that is, it pours ideas into our minds, words only drop them. The

³³ Richardson, "A Discourse on the Science of a Connoisseur," pp. 241-346, pp. 256-263.

whole scene opens at one view, whereas the other way lifts up the curtain little by little."³⁴

Richardson's challenge concerning the Ugolino-theme was only taken up after his son republished his works in 1773, and dedicated them to Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy and Fellow of the Royal Society. Sir Joshua rose to the occasion, and his painting Ugolino was finished in the same year and exhibited to general acclaim at the Royal Academy. A mezzotint of this work was produced by J. Dixon in the following year.

Prominent among the painters of the enlightenment who followed Richardson's precepts was Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825), or Henry Fuseli as he was called when he settled in England after he became involved in a controversy with the city fathers of his native Zürich, and had to flee with his fellow culprit, Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801). His art visualises in Richardsonian manner all the major intellectual and literary trends of his time. Like Richardson and Hogarth, Fuseli was a painter with a passionate interest in a variety of contemporary concerns, and he became closely associated with leading minds in England--especially Garrick and his

³⁴ Richardson, "Theory of Painting," pp. 1-157, p. 2.

circle, and later with Blake. He also kept in touch with events in Germany, and remained close to Lavater, and through him to Goethe and the Weimar writers.

Fuseli's work is filled with menippean images and the extremes which are an integral part of the genre. He was fascinated by the power and serene perfection of classic art, but more so by irrational passions and emotions, by dreams and the superstitious recesses of the human mind. Much of his work is of disturbing intensity, but he could also command the satiric vein, and his first drawing of the Ugolino-theme is a mock-heroic parody of the grand manner. He was inspired by classic ideals, as well as by Shakespeare, Milton, the Ossianic rhapsodies and the German epic tradition, but his paintings also witness to the doubts and torments of the late enlightenment. His themes, which parallel largely those of Bonaventura, mirror with exceptional intensity the intellectual developments of the late enlightenment and its affinity to romanticism.

CHAPTER IV

ROBERT BURTON (1577-1649) AND THE SATIRIC TRADITION OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

In the words of Northrop Frye, "the Menippean satirist, dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes, shows his exuberance in intellectual ways, by piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme." Hence Frye regards Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, for which "this creative treatment of exhaustive erudition is the organizing principle," as "the greatest Menippean satire in English before Swift."¹ If we trace Burton's influence upon eighteenth-century English satire, we can begin to understand how this tradition of exhaustive erudition, in which the Nightwatches participate, indicates Bonaventura's orientation towards England.

Robert Burton's massive work was published in 1621 under the pseudonym Democritus Junior, a name that was to provide the reader with a proper perspective. Democritus, as Burton recalls in a

¹ Frye, Anatomy, p. 311.

lengthy introduction, was a philosopher who found the perpetual follies of his fellow men a source of never ending amusement. The mostly tragic anecdotes from human history cramming the pages of the Anatomy are thus presented as a tragi-comedy; the human condition appears both pitiable and ludicrous.

The address of "Democritus Junior to the Reader" starts with a stage metaphor, adding a further indication of the satirical intention:

Gentle Reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitive to know what antick or personate actor this is that so insolently intrudes upon this common theatre to the world's view, arrogating another man's name; whence he is, why he doth it, and what he hath to say.²

Reader participation, which is such an essential part of the menippean tradition, is therewith demanded from the beginning. Burton takes such cooperation for granted, while later satirists solicit it much less openly and much more subtly. Swift, in particular, displayed fertile invention in assuring the reader's attention. Next Burton defines his theme by quoting Martial:

No Centaurs here, or Gorgons look to find
My subject is of man, and human kind.

² Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy. Ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (1621; New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1948). "Democritus Junior to the Reader," p. 11.

Still addressing the reader, he paraphrases this statement bluntly in his own words, "Thou thyself art the subject of my discourse." While the focus of the satire is thus turned onto the reader, and he is warned not to laugh at others without first examining his own record, Burton does not exempt himself. He calls repeatedly to mind that "Democritus himself had a merry kind of madness," and he always includes himself when speaking of human failings: "No man amongst us so sound, of so good a constitution, that hath not some impediment of body or mind. We have all our infirmities, first or last, more or less."³

References to the famous and the obscure of all ages, and copious quotations from ancients and moderns alike, are not just casual asides with which the author of the Anatomy parades his learning. They constitute the core of his method to present human deviations from rational behaviour as comprehensively and from as many different angles as possible. Wherever feasible, examples from classic literature are therefore paired with illustrations from the scriptures, and pagan and christian writers are set side by side. All contribute to the depressing realisation that human folly prevails everywhere and transcends all ages and creeds.

³ Burton, p. 11; pp. 341, 119.

To achieve comprehensiveness, Bonaventura likewise couples references from classical authors and the scriptures, though, as he aims at utmost brevity, he is allusive where Burton is deliberately discursive and copious. From the scriptures both authors parallel particularly Ecclesiasticus with its themes of human folly, madness and despair; the view that "much study is a weariness to the flesh" (Eccl. XII, 12), and the recurrent theme that "all is vanity."

By amassing evidence of irrational passions, and by heaping example upon example, Burton turns suffering and pathos into the absurd. Ever willing to disclose his procedures and sources, he describes the serio-comic attitude with which the menippea reacts to human tragedies when he confesses that he "did sometimes laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, sometimes again I was bitterly mirthful, and then again burning with rage; I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not amend."⁴ Kreuzgang's reactions approximate this oxymoronic attitude very closely.

Burton's aim is to investigate how "passions and perturbations of the Mind" cause melancholy, and he considers man a "microcosm" in which "the body works

⁴ Burton, p. 15.

upon the mind . . . sending gross fumes into the brain, and so disturbing the soul, and all faculties of it." In support of this view he quotes Horace:

The body, clogged with yesterday's excess,
Drags down the mind as well.⁵

The spirit, prevented from soaring off into higher regions by the gross demands of the body, is one of the basic subjects of menippean satire, and the Anatomy thrives on this dichotomy. As the physician's skill during the seventeenth century was far from refined and Burton never minced words, some of his proposed remedies are crude indeed. Never, though, obscene, for he is not after titillation but searches earnestly to reconcile the inherent passions and longings of human nature with reality.

His method seems deceptively simple, a mere compilation of the collective wisdom and experience of the ages. By clever juxtaposition he exposes, however, confusion and contradiction everywhere. What one sage recommends another is sure to condemn, and when good advice is unanimous, people are bound to disregard it. While human knowledge is thereby held up to ridicule, Burton is also teaching the useful lesson that nothing must be believed without the test of experience. Only by sifting the evidence

⁵ Burton, p. 217.

and by using inherited knowledge to practical ends is progress possible, and this idea is illustrated by the parable which Burton attributes to a Didacus Stella : "A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a Giant may see farther than a Giant himself."⁶

Burton recommends with this simile how human insights should be advanced by patient accumulation of knowledge, and explains how he created out of the mass of inherited erudition what Bakhtin calls "the deliberate multi-styled and heterovoiced nature of all" serio-comic genres, which "reject the stylistic unity" natural to other genres, and are characterized by "multi-toned narration, the mixing of high and low . . . inserted genres--letters, found manuscripts, retold dialogues, parodies on the high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations."⁷ Out of this "vast Chaos and confusion of books" Burton has shaped something entirely new and unique, and he expresses awareness of this in the words of one Macrobius: "'tis all mine and none mine." He constantly reveals not only his sources, but also his methods, and so he tells us that his amalgamation is "as a good housewife out of divers fleeces weaves one piece of cloth, a bee gathers wax and honey out of many flowers, and

⁶ Burton, p. 20.

⁷ Bakhtin, Problems, p. 108.

makes a new bundle of all."⁸ Bonaventura's technique is closely attuned to this method.

The parable of the bees is ascribed by Burton to Lucretius and Varro, and it was later used and cleverly expanded by Swift in his Battle of the Books. Swift follows Burton also in using the pseudonym as a guide to the reader with which he must interpret the satiric intention of a work. His crass use of scatological imagery echoes the language of the Anatomy while Sterne, who borrowed and paraphrased freely from Burton, replaced offending crudeness with hints and allusions.

When medical and rational means fail to cure a patient from melancholy--which in Burton's view is a serious, but still reversible step towards madness--he recommends psychological remedies, and flinches not from deceit. He claims:

The pleasantest dotage that ever I read, said Laurentius, was of a Gentleman at Senes in Italy, who was afraid to piss, lest all the Town should be drowned; the Physicians caused the bells to be rung backward, and told him the Town was on fire, whereupon he made water, and was immediately cured.⁹

Gulliver saves the burning apartments of the Empress in Lilliput in a manner strongly reminiscent

⁸ Burton, p. 19.

⁹ Burton, p. 477.

of this anecdote.¹⁰ There is also an unmistakable affinity between Burton's anecdote and case history No.1 in the Ninth Nightwatch. When Kreuzgang introduces this unfortunate lunatic by referring to numerous ancient examples of misapplied greatness, "a Curtius, Coriolanus, Regulus and the like," he uses Burton's accumulative manner of confirmation as if to draw attention to a connection with the Anatomy. The insanity of No.1 consists

in valuing mankind too high and himself too low; therefore in contrast to bad poets, he retains his body fluids because he fears bringing on a general deluge through their release. (p. 147)

Equating generally-admired martial heroes, like Coriolan, with insanity accords also with Burton's procedure. He classifies the urge to conquer and dominate as a grievous aberration of the mind and thus as a clear sign of madness. Burton's piquant and amusing story is not simply retold in the Nightwatches, but has been reshaped into a parable of general significance by translating it into an allegory. Every detail is transposed onto a different plane and a singular, peculiar incident is

¹⁰ Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings by Jonathan Swift. Ed. and intr. Miriam Kosh Starkmann (1962; Toronto: Bantam Books, 1981). From the revised ed. of 1735. The original title is Travels into several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver, first Surgeon and then a Captain of several Ships (1726). Part I, Chapt. v.

thereby transformed into a metaphor for the anguish of a productive mind, unable to find an outlet for its titanic creativity.

In a Germany conditioned by Greek orientated idealism and the high standards of classical beauty, scatological metaphors were not appreciated, nor likely to be interpreted as parables of existential significance. In his metonymic manipulation of the Italian tale Bonaventura also uses an idea which Lichtenberg recorded in some notes for a proposed satire around April 1776: "Seine gelehrte Nothdurft auf Papier verrichten,"--to respond to the learned call of nature on paper.

Burton's definition of madness as a more violent stage of melancholy,¹¹ and of melancholy as a state to which everybody is prone, in particular scholars and thinkers, strongly stimulated eighteenth-century preoccupation with madness. It is also helpful in understanding Kreuzgang's use of madness as a metonym for the irrational predicament that man is compelled to search for knowledge, though Eccl. I, 17, 18 has already lamented that "in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

¹¹ Burton, p. 122.

Such "syncrisis (that is, juxtaposition)" is typical of the menippea, and leads to the "sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations" which are so characteristic of the genre.¹² In this spirit Burton assembles from myths, history and the Bible suitable grounds for consolation "against Sorrow for Death of Friends or otherwise," adding "and so should we rather be glad for such as die well, that they are so happily freed from the miseries of this life." He even relates how the Thracians wept "when a child was born, feasted and made mirth when any man was buried."¹³ The funeral oration which Kreuzgang composed as a christening gift to his foster-father's little son is part of this oxymoronic ancient tradition (p. 113). While it satirically repeats the age-old negative view of life, it satirizes at the same time those who thought that "the title [of his christening oration] was a mistake" (p. 114), both for their blindness to the tragedy of life and for their unfamiliarity with classic and biblical precedent.

Northrop Frye notes that the menippea has "baffled critics, and there is hardly any fiction writer deeply influenced by it who has not been

¹² Bakhtin, Problems, pp. 115-16, p. 118.

¹³ Burton, p. 539.

accused of disorderly conduct."¹⁴ Typifying this loose construction, Burton often interrupts the flow of his narration with digressions; his explanation for the first suffices for them all: "I hold it not impertinent to make a brief digression . . . for the better understanding of that which is to follow; . . . it may peradventure give occasion to some men, to examine more accurately, search farther into this most excellent subject."¹⁵ Swift uses digressions in his Tale of a Tub in like manner, and Bonaventura's many interpolations are also intended for the same purpose and stand in the same tradition. Rosemary Hunter, who regards digressions as "the salient structural device" in the Nightwatches, sees in them a special link to Sterne,¹⁶ who in turn was strongly influenced by Burton.

By quoting copiously from Horace and from Juvenal, Burton managed to combine the two schools of satire represented by these classic authors: elegant ridicule and burning indignation. Bonaventura attempts a similar fusion, providing a reference to

¹⁴ Frye, p. 313.

¹⁵ Burton, p. 127.

¹⁶ Rosemarie Hunter, "Nachtwachen von Bonaventura and Tristram Shandy." Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, CRCL/RCLC, I, 1974, pp. 218-34, p. 227.

Juvenal by the unusual number of his chapters and by careful organization of his narration into five cycles,¹⁷ and to Horace by direct mention of his Letter to the Pisans, also known as Ars Poetica (p. 195).

Burton's exhaustive treatment of his chosen subject, mankind itself, assured that later writers had to use many of his topics and satirical devices. His influence can therefore be traced in much of English eighteenth-century literature, but the form of encyclopedic compilation which he chose for his satire was rarely re-used, though Frye proposes to adopt the word anatomy as a replacement for the term *menippea*.¹⁸

However, Daniel Defoe in his History of the Devil does provide such an anatomy.¹⁹ In this rather uneven work Defoe (1661-1731) follows the conception and reception of the Devil from biblical times onwards. Defoe's irony and witty observations begin to sparkle when he reaches contemporary manifestations of this ancient enemy of mankind; and

¹⁷ Terras, pp. 23-25.

¹⁸ Frye, pp. 311-12.

¹⁹ Daniel Defoe, The History of the Devil. Ancient and Modern in Two Parts (1728; rpr. E. P. Publishing Ltd., 1927), from the 1819 London ed. by T. Kelly.

he warns especially against self-assured sophistication, which denies the existence of demons and therefore falls easy prey to the devil when he appears in his modern elegant guise in quite ordinary and thus unexpected surroundings.

Defoe presents the cloven foot as the sign of the goat, and he believes that this animal was chosen to represent evil because of its similarity to sheep, which are the symbol of the saved. In a variation on the old theme of duality, already inherent in the devil's origin as a fallen angel, he presents the dangers of evil not in their abhorrent traits, but precisely in their affinity to goodness, which allows perversion in unguarded moments. To drive this moral home Defoe points out that the ram and swine also have a cloven hoof.²⁰

Interpreted in this light, Kreuzgang's limp is not just a mark of his godfather, the devil, but a sign of the split human nature in a much wider context. He himself draws attention to this double aspect when he mentions Vulcan almost casually in the same paragraph in which he tells of his affliction (p. 53), for Vulcan's limp was caused by a fall from Olympus, just as Satan's by expulsion from heaven.

²⁰ Defoe, p. 288.

Both were punished for aspiring to be like the highest god, an ambition which is inherent in the in the quest for knowledge to which Kreuzgang is committed.

Defoe points out the frequent idiomatic appearance of the devil in everyday language, and plays with such oxymoronic combinations as "a dear devil," also "the keenest little devil," or "merry devils." He quotes proverbial references to the devil's misshapen ugliness, warning not to rely on this image. Now, he explains, the devil acts "in the grand manner," having finally caught up with the polite principles and the refined wickedness developed during the Roman Empire. From a terrifying spectre, that frightened off all but the most depraved and desperate, he has turned himself into a man of the world, ready to deceive even the most goodnatured and innocent.²¹ It is this polished devil who hovers in the background of the Nightwatches, and shows himself openly in the short fragment, also attributed to Bonaventura, "The Devil's Almanac."²²

²¹ Defoe, p. 324, p. 335, pp. 338-339, p. 412.

²² Ed. Paulsen, Nachtwachen, "Des Teufels Taschenbuch," p. 145-47.

The blue light, which burns during Kreuzgang's conception (p.235) is mentioned several times in The History of the Devil, where Defoe reports "all insist that the candles burnt blue, and all pretended that the Devil was certainly in the room, and was the occasion of it."²³ The gypsy mother's enigmatic reference to blue light as an indication of the devil's presence accords with Defoe's reference. In German folklore blue light has ambiguous connotations, and can also indicate the location of hidden treasure or confer magical powers.²⁴

When Kreuzgang sits before the mirror of his imagination and perceives among other reflections staring at him "en face the devil as well" (p. 111), the experience is reminiscent of an incident related by Defoe. A girl was teasingly assured that the devil could even assume her pleasing appearance, and to prove this a specially prepared mirror was teasingly handed to her which "had a hollow case so framed behind a looking-glass," that she could see the Devil's face with her own superimposed on it.

²³ Defoe, pp. 392-93, p. 382.

²⁴ Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens. Ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), entries on "blau" and "Licht." Cf. The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm. Tr. and intr. Jack Zipes (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), No. 116. "The Blue Light," pp. 418-21.

The terrified maiden was then told with idiomatic ambiguity, "it was nothing but her own natural picture, she proves herself still to be the devil of a lady."²⁵

Another anecdote from The History of the Devil, this one taken by Defoe from Rocheford's Memoires, p. 179, also resurfaces in the Nightwatches. It tells how the magistrates of Bern in Switzerland, finding that French actors opened a puppet show in their tranquil town, "had certainly condemned the poor puppets to the flame for devils, and censured, if not otherwise punished their masters."²⁶ The same disaster--updated to satirize the fear and frenzy surrounding the French Revolution--befalls Kreuzgang and his marionettes. "Servants of the court . . . took the entire company prisoners in the name of the state, because they had been declared politically dangerous" (p. 227).

At Lichtenberg's death only Vol. II of The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe from the London, 1776 edition was in his library (No. 1640). Two short notes show, however, that his interest in Defoe was active and continuing: an entry on the inside of the cover to his note book K, "To read Defoe's writings.

²⁵ Defoe, pp. 328-29.

²⁶ Defoe, pp. 328-29, pp. 402-03.

An essay on his life and works in the European Magazine 1793. January and February,"²⁷ and one from his diary of 1775 "The political history and modern history of the Devil contains here and there some very good humour and satire."²⁸

The same diary, written during the second sojourn in England, also contains a critical appraisal of two plays by Samuel Foote (1720-77), and Lichtenberg was especially intrigued by one of them, The Devil upon two Sticks, which he saw on May 15th, 1775. Though he regarded it as written without any plan, he admired the topical multi-directed satire of the play, especially that against the medical profession, which he found far more bitter than in Moliere.²⁹ The comedy is among three by Foote which Lichtenberg owned (No. 1773, 1773a, 1774). Loosely based on Alain-René LeSage's Le diable boiteux (1707), with its modern devil, Foot's farce owed its exceptional success to its satiric attack on current affairs.

Numerous similarities between LeSage's work and the Nightwatches were already noticed by Hermann

²⁷ Ed. Leitzmann, Aphorismen, Vol. 141, p. 141.

²⁸ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 163.

²⁹ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 145.

Michel in 1904.³⁰ Above all they share the episodic structure for which unity is provided by a lame and physically ill favoured protagonist, and this is also the organizing arrangement in Foote's comedy. Few of the other features which the Nightwatches have in common with LeSage's *menippea* were, however, used by Foote, and Bonaventura must therefore have been acquainted with LeSage himself.

Lichtenberg owned a bi-lingual edition of Gil Blas (NO. 1733), and he preferred this work, together with the Arabian Nights, Robinson Crusoe, and Tom Jones "a thousand times to the Messiah" by Klopstock (F 69). Gil Blas features also in the observation:

Robber's caves have already been used in fiction by Lucian, who is said to have in his turn taken them from an earlier source; Apuleius, Heliodor, Aristo, Spenser and Le Sage J 352.

Written in early 1790 this note bears witness to Lichtenberg's interest in the latest romantic literary trends, as well as to his customary thoroughness in tracing all phenomena back to their origins as far as possible. This characteristic allows us to assume Lichtenberg's familiarity with the serio-comic Le diable boiteux, in which Burton's themes of madness are combined with the Anatomy's

³⁰ Michel, pp. xvii-xviii.

search for "perfect knowledge of human life,"³¹ while the devil appears as a polite man of the world with all the good manners Defoe credits to him.

"In connection with the philosophical universalism of the menippea," Bakhtin perceives "a three-planed construction" where "action and dialogic syncrisis are transferred from earth to Olympus and to the nether world." He traces the "dialogues of the dead," which later became a special genre, to this tradition.³² Graveyard-locations, as in LeSage, often fulfill this requirement, to which Burton responds only by numerous references to the devil and evil spirits throughout his work, but also by a special "Digression on the nature of Spirits, bad Angels, or Devils, and how they cause Melancholy."³³ LeSage uses the more conventional graveyard scene of the menippea, where the hero is acquainted with the fate of the dead who repose there.³⁴

From this menippean scenery and mood springs also the English graveyard poetry of which Edward

³¹ Alain Rene Le Sage, Asmodeus or the Devil upon two Sticks. Tr. James Townsend (London: J. C. Nimmo and Bain, n.d.), Chapt. iii, p. 14.

³² Bakhtin, Problems, p. 116.

³³ Burton, pp. 157-76.

³⁴ Le Sage, Chapt. xii: "Of the Tombs, the Ghosts, and Death," pp. 178 ff.

Young and Thomas Gray (1716-71) were the principal representatives. Lichtenberg owned the second edition of Gray's Poems, London 1775 (No. 1648). In a letter to Eschenburg he discusses his problems in translating Gray's expression "moody madness" from "A Distant Prospect of Eton College", which he used for his description of Hogarth's Bedlam scene, Plate VIII of the Rake's Progress.³⁵

Lichtenberg also owned Young's works, both in an English edition of 1757 and in Ebert's translation of 1768-74 (Nos. 1673-74). The influence of the melancholy Night Thoughts on the Nightwatches has been frequently recognized, but Horst Fleig has shown that Bonaventura also refers to Young's satire "The Centaur not Fabulous." On the titleplate the centaur is shown dressed as a scaramouch from the commedia dell'arte. He tramples with his hooves on the Ten Commandments, and flouts a streamer with the Greek words "gnothi seauton," know thyself.

This unusual combination recurs in the Ninth Nightwatch, where Kreuzgang introduces, with a sarcastic dig at Lavater's physiognomy, his "own little fool's chamber," which contains "a bust of Socrates, by whose nose you recognize his wisdom, just as you recognize Scaramouch's folly." A satire

³⁵ Promies IV, p. 946, May 8, 1796.

on "all three bread faculties"--those which could lead to wealth and honour--follows, where Kreuzgang proposes "wearing all three doctor's hats piled one on top of the other" (p. 155). Fleig interprets this idea as inspired by the three tiers of the Chinese pagoda which rises behind the centaur.³⁶ The suggestion gains plausibility from Kreuzgang's explanation:

What a surplus of wisdom and money--a desirable combination of the two opposed goods, a highest idealisation of the centaur nature in man, when the well satisfied animal below allows the higher rider to strut about audaciously . . .
[sic], (p. 157).

Not only are all the components of Young's title plate reworked into metaphors which define Kreuzgang's own existential position, he compresses also important thoughts from Young's satire into his short summary. "The Centaur not Fabulous" claims that centaurs are not myths, but an allegory of man with his lower half part of the animal world. The creature is therefore emblematic of the split nature of man, which is one of the characteristic themes of the menippea. Young's satirical use of the mythological hybrid is reminiscent of Burton's quotation of Martial.

³⁶ Fleig, Literarischer Vampirismus, pp. 232-35; p. 234, Fig. 10; text pp. 234-35.

Burton's hope for improvement of the human condition lies in strict adherence to the Socratic advice "Know thyself." Young, like Burton, uses satire as a vehicle for advocating this command, which became a leitmotif of enlightened literature in England, and like Burton--and indeed the menippea in general--he took man as the subject of "The Centaur not Fabulous."

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) also propagates the need of man to come to terms with himself. His formulation "The whole man must move together," was quoted by Lichtenberg various times and used as the motto of his notebook C, which he started on July 27th, 1773.³⁷ Most important about Addison for our purpose, however, are his ties--quiet and implicit--to both Burton and Lichtenberg. Addison's Spectator influenced German literary life decisively. His moral, optimistic philosophy, based on Locke and Shaftesbury, satisfied the rationalistic age and directed the enlightened quest for progress. His elegant style improved literacy; the breadth of his topics aroused interest in learning. His wit and gentle satire assured him a large readership in

³⁷ Promies, Vol. I, p. 155.

Germany, too, where the Spectator stimulated a large number of moralizing weeklies.³⁸

Lichtenberg's edition of the Spectator is the 6th, London 1723, and of the eight volumes IV and V are missing (No. 39). Lord Boston's ex libris suggests that Lichtenberg received the work as a present from his host during his first visit to England. The Göttingischer Taschenkalender was written for a similar section of the public as that addressed by Addison, and followed the pattern pioneered by him, including reports on the newest fashions for ladies. This deliberate lure accustomed new readers to the amusingly presented serious topics. Literacy was thereby spread and a responsible attitude to life was packaged into an attractive mixture of humour and irony, and for better understanding abstract themes were translated into anecdotal and parabolic narration. Lichtenberg followed Addison also in using literary criticism as a means of influencing and shaping public opinion.

Addison's influence was extensive, and like that of Burton, it is not always easy to trace in particular cases, because he, too, dealt with topics of such diverse nature and based his discourses on so

³⁸ Price, English Literature in Germany, Chapt. iv, "The Moralizing Weeklies," pp. 51-60.

many different sources. His special gift was the interpretation of current thoughts, and the explanation of problems through memorable similes. Where his themes can be paralleled with those of the Nightwatches, the connection confirms therefore their prominence in English eighteenth-century thought in general, rather than a direct link with the Spectator.

Theatre metaphors and their origin in classical literature belong to this category. Addison quotes Epictetus among others:

We are here (says he) as in a theatre, where every one has a part allotted to him. The great duty which lies upon a man is, to act his part in perfection. We may, indeed, say that our part does not suit us, and that we could act another better. But this (says the philosopher) is not our business. All that we are concerned in is, to excel in the part which is given us. If it is an improper one, the fault is not in us, but in Him, who has 'cast' our several parts, and is the great disposer of the drama.³⁹

This is followed by a passage from "the little apocryphal book, entitled 'The Wisdom of Solomon'," which exposes the vanity of human desire for longing and recognition, and says of "the righteous man . . . we fools accounted his life madness."

³⁹ The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison. Ed. H. G. Bohn, 6 Vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888) Vol. III, Nr. 219, pp. 100-01.

The parentheses show that Addison adopted Burton's method of distancing himself from his subject matter by allocating responsibility for it elsewhere.

A later essay develops these thoughts. It starts with an explanation of Addison's technique:

When I have finished any of my speculations, it is my method to consider which of the ancient authors have touched upon the subject that I treat of. By this means I meet with some celebrated thought upon it, or a thought of my own expressed in better words, or some similitude for the illustration of my subject.⁴⁰

Both Lichtenberg and the author of the Nightwatches follow this enlightened procedure. They also share Addison's partiality for a belief in the transmigration of the soul, a theme which crops up frequently in the Spectator. The idea that "human souls, upon their leaving the body, become the soul of such kinds of brutes as they most resemble in their manners" is ascribed to Pythagoras' speech in the fifteenth book of Ovid, of which Addison quotes part in the translation by Dryden. In another essay this belief is traced to Sir Paul Rycaut's account of Mohamedans. While Addison treats the subject on this occasion with some good-natured humour, at other times he presents it more seriously as a "Platonic notion."⁴¹

Twice Lichtenberg mentions his own belief in transmigration in connection with his early youth (F

⁴⁰ Addison, Vol. III, Nr. 221, p. 102.

⁴¹ Addison, Vol. II, Nr. 211, p. 89, Nr. 343, p. 335; Vol. II, Nr. 90, p. 406.

1217, J 853). He contemplated this possibility all through adult life, and recorded at the end that he had given some account of his thoughts on metempsychosis in his notebook K, p. 18 and p. 24 (L 958). Unfortunately these pages have not survived. In E 474 Lichtenberg proposes to test his opinions on transmigration with Hartley's theories, in J 2043 with Kant's philosophy. In A 91 he suggests the polyp as analogy to his idea of metempsychosis, and D 161 gives a hint of his meaning, for there he speculates that man might be half spirit and half matter, just as the polyp is half animal and half plant. He adds: "the most interesting beings exist always at the borderline."

Transmigration is a rare theme in German literature, and the nineteenth-century edition of Grimm's Wörterbuch registers use of the word Seelenwanderung only in an essay by Herder in historical context, and twice by Jean Paul as a figure of speech.⁴² But Bonaventura mentions it on various occasions, and his final chapter suggests the possibility that "the shapes of the decayed assume a kindlier form and blossom forth again as beautiful flowers" (p. 239). A satirical variation of this

⁴² Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854).

vision is given when No. 10 and No. 11 in the lunatic asylum are presented as "evidence for metempsychosis; the first barks as a dog and formerly served at court; the second has changed himself from a state official into a wolf" (p. 155). In the Twelfth Nightwatch Kreuzgang exclaims satirically: "If there is a transmigration of souls, which I do not doubt, and if the departed spirits, as would then not be improbable, travel just as easily into flowers and fruits, etc., as into animals--where then does this connecting canal of spirits reside other than in the stomach swallowing them" (p. 187).

The interrelation between body and soul, stomach and mind, leads back to Burton, whose "Digression of Spirits" already reports of spirits, "that they are the souls of men departed, the good and more noble were deified, the baser grovelled on the ground, or in the lower parts, and were devils." Burton also mentions a chain of beings which may link God and man, attributing to "Plato in Critias, and after him his followers" the opinion, that "spirits or devils were men's governors and keepers, our lords and masters, as we are of our cattle."⁴³

Bonaventura's Mad Worldcreator in the Ninth Nightwatch is akin to these slightly lesser spirits:

⁴³ Burton, p. 158, p. 172.

powerful but neither perfect nor omniscient. He is reminiscent of Lichtenberg's speculation that the world may be the work of a subaltern being, the experiment of one who was as yet unskilled and inexperienced, and that a chain of beings between man and God might be quite possible (K 69). Johnson, in his "Review of [Soame Jenyns], A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, (1757)" calls this same concept "the Arabian scale of existence,"⁴⁴ and he quotes Jenyns as asserting that "the supreme being . . . has created innumerable ranks and orders of beings." Man, according to this view, is on probation, preparing himself to join either the higher or the lower ranks.

Johnson shared many themes with Addison, and his periodical essays follow the same precept of disseminating knowledge and perception through excellent and lucid writing. Addison's worldly-wise optimism and his enlightened confidence in progress are not shared by Johnson, whose passionate commitment to the concerns of the soul made him aware of the fragility of human achievement, and of the uncertainties of man's status after death. When he

⁴⁴ Samuel Johnson, "Review of [Soame Jenyns], 'A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil'," pp. 522-543, p. 543.

wrote a Latin ode on the theme "Know Thyself" he confessed that

turning to survey its territory,
that night'shadowed tundra,
the mind is full of fear--of ghosts,
of the fleeting glimmer
of the thin shadows of nothing,
the absence of shapes, the shimmer.
What then am I to do?
Let my declining years go down to the dark?
Or get myself together,
gather the last of my gall,
and hurl myself at some task
huge enough for a hero?"⁴⁵

At the end of the Nightwatches Kreuzgang is similarly torn between the echoes of "Nothing" and the heroic urge to "go forth prepared to face the giant of the other world!" (p. 147).

Like Burton, Lichtenberg, and Bonaventura, Johnson, too, appreciated the satires of both Horace--from whom he translated several odes--and Juvenal. His two most famous poems are London, an imitation of Juvenal's third satire, and The Vanity of Human Wishes, an imitation of the tenth, in which themes from the scriptures, notably from Ecclesiasticus, are merged with the classic model. In London Juvenal's Rome is transposed into a contemporary setting, but both cities are only metonymic for the habitat of man, and merely provide the stage on which he commits his follies and his crimes. Together with the Lives

⁴⁵ Samuel Johnson, p. 539, p. 29.
(Translated from the original Latin by John Wain).

of the Poets, Lichtenberg liked these two odes particularly among all the works of Johnson.⁴⁶

Johnson's most popular Life was An Account of the Life of Mr Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers (1774). With its melodramatic storyline of scandal and tragedy, and the demasking perspectives on highest society and on life in the gutter, it was read in Germany more than any of Johnson's other works. Lichtenberg knew it already in 1769, when he compares Savage to the German poet Johann Christian Günther, whose hopes were similarly blighted. Both men, in his opinion, show that brilliance is often purchased with deficiency in talents which are taken for granted in the average population (A 116).

The Life of Savage is so strongly reflected in the Nightwatches that Karl-Heinz Meyer has recently proposed Johann Karl Wezel (1745-1819), whose history shows striking parallels with that of Savage, as Bonaventura.⁴⁷ Johnson's Lives include others who epitomized the plight of the intellectual and idealist, a theme on which the menippea thrives and on which Burton had also much to say. The ill-fated

⁴⁶ Promies, Vol. IV, p. 513, Letter to Edmund von Harold, June 20, 1783.

⁴⁷ Karl-Heinz Meyer, "Johann Karl Wezel und die 'Nachtwachen von Bonaventura'." Neues aus der Wezel-Forschung. Heft 2. Arbeitskreis Johann Karl Wezel des Kulturbundes der DDR, Sonderhausen, 1984, pp. 63-86.

Thomas Otway and the suicide Thomas Chatterton belong to this group, and to Johnson himself, as to his friend Oliver Goldsmith, the poor poet in the garret was no mere literary convention, but a reality familiar from bitter experience.

Johnson felt, and sometimes resisted the current interests of the enlightenment to such a degree that his time is known in England as the Age of Johnson. Similarities between themes and concerns in the Nightwatches and Johnson's single excursion into fiction, The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia (1759), need therefore prove no more than that both authors share an intellectual background. Johnson compressed much of his philosophy into this short "oriental tale," which he wrote according to Boswell "in the evenings of one week" under the shadow of his mother's death, "that with the profits he might defray the expense of his mother's funeral, and pay some little debts which she had left." Though the deeply religious Johnson omitted all direct reference to Christian belief, Boswell insists that "Johnson meant, by showing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal."⁴⁸ Lichtenberg, always keenly interested in

⁴⁸ Boswell, pp. 240 and 424.

Samuel Johnson's work and thoughts, read Boswell's Life hot from the press in 1791.⁴⁹

In structure, philosophical content, and length the Nightwatches have much in common with Rasselas. Both present loosely connected episodes. Actions in both tales may be violent, as the kidnapping in Rasselas (Chapt. xxxiii) or a nun's murder in the Nightwatches. They are, however, not reported spontaneously but reach the reader already filtered through an active mind. Like Johnson's prince, Kreuzgang is driven by a constant hunger of imagination; and both recognize the paradox which disturbed the minds during the enlightenment--that the human spirit cannot find happiness without something to desire, yet can never be satisfied until everything longed for is within its reach. Both works deal with attitudes toward death and dying, and both end with "nothing," a word which has been skillfully woven into each text with differing techniques and subtly changing shades of meaning. Johnson ends his tale with "The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded." The prince and his party return from whence they came, because "of these

⁴⁹ The Life of Samuel Johnson was published in 2 volumes in London 1791. Lichtenberg began reading on September 17, 1791, see "Diary," Promies, Vol. II, p. 730.

wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained" (Chapt. xlix).

The madness which satiric tradition couples with excessive speculative learning is introduced by Johnson in the digression "The History of a Man of Learning" (Chapts. xl-xliv). Burton provides the classic origins of the delusions from which Johnson's mad astronomer, the hero of this interlude, suffers. He quotes "Leonartus Fuchsius, Felix Plater, and Hercules de Saxonia" who "speak of a peculiar fury, which comes by overmuch study. Fernelius puts study, contemplation, and continual meditation, as an especial cause of madness . . . so doth Levinus Lemnius. Many men (saith he) come to this malady by continual study, and night-walking, and, of all other men, scholars are most subjects to it." As Democritus Jr., he has already told his readers:

If any man shall ask . . . who I am, that so boldly censure others, have I no faults? Yes, more than thou hast, whatsoever thou art. We are the merest ciphers, I confess it again, I am as foolish, as mad as any one.

I seem to you insane, I pray you think so
(Petronius)

I do not deny it, let the mad men be removed from the people. My comfort is, I have more fellows, and those of excellent note.

When Burton's satiric persona Democritus concludes, "that all the world is melancholy, or mad, dotes, and every member of it," he presents himself at the same time humbly as an average representative

of all mankind, and proudly as a thinker who follows the example of the greatest, such as Socrates.⁵⁰ Kreuzgang repeats this menippean pattern which was followed by the English eighteenth-century satirists, notably Swift and the Scriblerians.

⁵⁰ Burton, p. 101.

CHAPTER V

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745) AND THE SATIRIC TECHNIQUES OF LICHTENBERG AND BONAVENTURA.

References to the body and its functions in the Nightwatches are mild compared to eighteenth-century English usage, which in many instances showed hardly a break with the lively language of Renaissance and Jacobean drama or the racy realism of Burton, but they irritated the sensibilities of nineteenth-century readers conditioned by the abstract refinement of German idealism and unused to bluntness in serious literature. English satirists of the eighteenth century employed such language frequently, and none more than Jonathan Swift, the erudite and respected Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin.

Lichtenberg learned to admire Swift's dazzling irony, his hard-hitting wit and the command of rhetorical rules with which he achieved the apparent ease of his expression, although his first notebook entry about the Dean is somewhat disparaging, and he even calls him a fool in it. Significantly, the excerpt from Swift which follows this remark is a

lampoon of the efforts to establish the longitude, and exposes the Dean's want of empathy with scientific achievements (B 43). The frequent attacks of Swift and his circle on scientists, and in particular on the Royal Society and the interest the Hanoverian Kings took in it, were not likely to meet with Lichtenberg's approval.¹ But Swift's penetrating wit and the compelling logic of his satire soon won Lichtenberg's praise, as two further notes immediately testify. The first is an epigram translated by Swift from the French which deals with the satiric theme of fools and madmen:

Sir, I admit Your gen'ral rule
That every poet is a fool,
But You Yourself may serve to show it
That every fool is not a poet. B 44

The next entry already contains high approbation, and sets Swift up as an example for satirists, praising in particular the general applicability of his thoughts, B 45.

¹ Jonathan Swift. "Ode for Musick, on Longitude:"

The Longitude mist on / By wicked Will Whiston,
And not better hit on / By good Mr. Ditton.
So Ditton and Whiston / May both be bepist on
And Whiston and Ditton / May both be beshit on
etc.

While not representative of Swift at his best, the rhyme--copied by Lichtenberg in B 43--exemplifies Swift's prejudices and misapprehensions about the importance of contemporary scientific work, as well as his uninhibited use of language.

Lichtenberg owned the works of Jonathan Swift, London 1766-79, 24 volumes, and a German translation of the Tale of a Tub (No. 1758-59). No. 1300 in Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana is a German translation of Swift's satirical treatise "An Argument to Prove that the Abolishing of Christianity in England May, as Things now Stand, be Attended with Some Inconveniences, and Perhaps Not Produce Those Many Good Effects Proposed Thereby" (1708), but as this title is usually abbreviated, Swift has not been identified as the author.

As late as 1798 Lichtenberg published in his Taschenkalender a list of oddities amassed by an English collector which he had found in 1775 in the library of an English country house on the back leaves of a volume of Swift's collected works. The items, written down "in the manner of Swift," positively invite satiric comment and include such treasures as "a knife without blade and the handle missing," and a butter dish in the form of a skull with a lid so tastefully fashioned that the butter is pressed into the shape of a human brain.² Some bottles of "Iceland-Madeira" Lichtenberg adapted to German understanding as "Lappland wine from 48,"

² Promies, Vol. III, pp. 451 ff., p. 452, and Kommentar zu Band III, pp. 212-15.

using "Lappland" as an antonym for "fresh, active and lively" exactly as Bonaventura does in the Third Nightwatch, when he describes the old judge "buried in piles of documents like a Lapplander interred alive" (p. 51). The dried out old man is signing death warrants and pouring over legal tomes, one the Peinliche Halsordnung, which Lichtenberg chose to translate the English Habeas Corpus Act in the list of items "in the manner of Swift." This weighty legal code had been set to music by the eccentric collector himself.³

The list of oddities testifies to Lichtenberg's habit of browsing through Swift's works and to his empathy with Swift's brand of humor. His collected notes show that he read, reread and thought about Swift's work, especially Gulliver's Travels and A Tale of a Tub.⁴ How much his own sure-aimed irony and masterly satiric techniques owed to Swift's exacting example has not yet been sufficiently appreciated.

Richard M. Meyer, who contributed considerably to the revival of interest in Lichtenberg, published his small volume Jonathan Swift und Georg Christoph

³ Promies, Vol. III, p. 456.

⁴ See D 214, D 666, RA 72, L 431; Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, Nos. 69, 131, 609.

Lichtenberg, zwei Satiriker des 18. Jahrhunderts (1886) without drawing any lines of contact between his two separate essays. Only once does he mention in passing that Lichtenberg's satirical base corresponds considerably to that of Swift, but in the same sentence he also points out fundamental differences between the two authors. As Meyer had to base his opinions on the selected writings published posthumously by Lichtenberg's family, this is hardly surprising.⁵ Even Franz H. Mautner mentions only casually in his extensive study on the development of Lichtenberg's thoughts that irony was a natural way for Lichtenberg to express himself, and that Liscow--a German satirist much admired in his time--and Swift were the two models for his satirical work.⁶ This statement is not further elaborated and Mautner hardly mentions Swift at all.

A different assessment of Swift's influence on Lichtenberg begins to emerge from the commentaries which Wolfgang Promies compiled for the assorted writings contained in Volume III of his comprehensive Lichtenberg edition. Meyer lacked this material, yet

⁵ Richard M. Meyer, Jonathan Swift und Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, zwei Satiriker des 18. Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1886), pp. 81-82.

⁶ Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes, p. 86. Christian Ludwig Liscow (1701-60) was himself much influenced by Swift.

his simultaneous fascination with Swift and Lichtenberg shows that he sensed an affinity in their outlook and techniques. Meyer was also among the first literary critics who studied the Nightwatches, and the first to draw a line from them to Lichtenberg, for he declared that the author seems to have been familiar with Lichtenberg's brief satire "Petition from the Lunatic Asylum" (E 245, E 58).

This short piece lampoons contemporary German writing, and in particular uses the exuberant and ungrammatical elliptical style of Lavater. It is phrased as a request for a library, and only the title indicates that the plea emanates from madmen. The title is therefore an integral part of the satiric structure, as it contains the only indication of how the letter must be understood. Title and letter are, of course, in German, but the petition is addressed in English to "My Lords," showing the strong English background against which Lichtenberg developed and perfected his own satirical genius. This connection surfaces everywhere in his work, and Meyer therefore described him as someone who felt in German and thought in English.⁷

Lichtenberg's consistent opposition to Lavater's intuitive, effusive, and experimentally unsupported

⁷ Meyer, p. 72.

physiognomy sprang from his own support of the English empirical method, and from his wish to understand man and his true nature--which also inspired the unmasking stratagems of the English satirists. These techniques appealed strongly to Lichtenberg's own satiric inclinations, and his implacable antagonism toward Lavater's simplistic parlor-game physiognomy originated from the same considerations as Swift's relentless fight against all abuses of the intellect.

To Lichtenberg, as to the English writers he admired, the face was not an open book, but a mask behind which the well-disciplined and better educated attempted to conceal their true nature. Thus he calls the effects of a too normative education a "copper mask" which is forced on children (D 19), and sees some people hide beneath a "mask of fat," a substance which is acquired and therefore a true part neither of body nor soul (E 172). He was convinced that "reading from the surface is the cause of our erroneous ideas, and in some respects of our total ignorance."⁸ Unmasking in all its various forms was therefore a major concern to him.

⁸ Promies, Vol. III, "Über Physiognomik; wider die Physiognomen," pp. 256-95, p. 265.

Tearing off disguises and stripping away pretences is a traditional task of the satirist, and Swift pursued it persistently. The brutal Yahoos whom Gulliver met on his last voyage are an example of this zeal in its most uncompromising form. Deprived of clothes and all the finery of civilisation, these creatures appear lower than animals.⁹ A different unmasking of human pretensions is accomplished through the pathetic struldbruggs, whom Gulliver encounters in the Kingdom of Luggnagg, where they are born without the ability to die. As they lose their youth, strength and possessions, they turn the dream of immortality into a nightmare, and expose human limitations in an unflattering and brutally realistic manner.¹⁰

The Nightwatches, too, treat immortality as a challenge which mankind is ill equipped to meet. When it falls to the lot of the stranger in the cloak, he uses his interminable existence paradoxically only for repeated suicide attempts. Kreuzgang's desperate but futile efforts to imagine how man can measure up to eternity transpose man's inability to deal with infinity onto a higher level, and meet Bakhtin's

⁹ Gulliver's Travels, Part IV: "Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms."

¹⁰ Gulliver's Travels, Part III, Chapt. x.

menippean requirement for a three planed construction, where the action ranges from earth to heaven and hell.¹¹

In Gulliver's Travels, Book III conforms closest to the characteristics which Bakhtin noted in the menippea. While the Olympian dimension is introduced by the novelty of an island floating in the sky, the nether-world is represented by a visit to Glubbdubbdrub, the Island of Sorcerers and Magicians. There the Governor has the power "of calling whom he pleaseth from the dead, and commanding their services for twenty-four hours but no longer." By this magic he calls the spirits of various illustrious men, and even of whole dynasties for Gulliver's instruction, among them Alexander the Great, who assured Gulliver "upon his honor, that he was not poisoned, but died of a fever by excessive drinking." No comment is added or needed, apart from Gulliver's explication: "one thing I might depend upon, that they would certainly tell me truth, for lying was a talent of no use in the lower world." This almost casual aside is all the guidance the reader is given through a pageant of merciless unmasking, for neither Gulliver, nor the Glubbdubbdrubian sorcerers, nor yet the author provides any explanation.

¹¹ Bakhtin, Problems, p. 116.

The art of manipulating the reader into framing and answering questions for himself, and the skill of compressing a maximum of meaning into a minimum of words are brilliantly displayed in this interlude. Take for one example Gulliver's report: "Next I saw Hannibal passing the Alps, who told me he had not a drop of vinegar in his camp."¹² The modern reader, unfamiliar with the details of Livy's History of Rome, needs to be told that according to Livy, Hannibal succeeded in crossing the Alps by building a fire on an impass and saturating it with vinegar. Instant recall of such learned details was never common, and Swift's aside is all too easily attributed to exuberant imagination. Many remarks by Lichtenberg and Bonaventura, based on reading which is not generally accessible, share this fate.

Once this is understood, one short sentence not only demolishes the myth-building of hero-worshipping historians, but also exposes the staggering credulity of succeeding generations who failed to query how the prodigious amounts of vinegar required for the success of such an engineering feat should have been procured amidst the hardships of an Alpine winter. Thus, while the reader is still

¹² Gulliver's Travels, Part III, Chapt. ix-xi, "Gulliver in the Kingdom of Luggnagg." Chapt. vii-viii, pp. 190, 192, 191, 192.

laughing at Livy's credulity, he is suddenly confronted with his own thoughtless acceptance of tradition. In his aphorisms Lichtenberg strove to achieve the same economy of language. Swift's aim in briefly bringing the famous dead to life was, as he puts it in A Tale of a Tub, to furnish "a plain instance how little truth there often is in general surmises."

Swift himself was well aware that many of his allusions would not be generally accessible, and he says as much in "On Poetry: A Rhapsody" (1733):

To statesmen would you give a wipe
You print it in italic type.
When letters are in vulgar shapes
'tis ten to one the Wit escapes;
But when in capitals expressed
The dullest reader smokes the jest.¹³

Among those who did appreciate Swift's virtuosity and his skill in manipulating references was Lichtenberg. He, too, aimed for brevity in expression, and he knew that he faced the same problem of being misunderstood. In E 257 he discourses on the depth of thought in classical writers and exemplifies his plea for multifarious meaning by showing that it is not necessary for everybody to understand everything, as long as all

¹³ Gulliver's Travels et al.: "A Tale of a Tub," pp. 279-394, p. 283; "Swift's Poems," pp. 506-35, p. 525.

derive some benefit from what they read. Thus the moon delights, in different ways, the astronomer, the wanderer at night and the babe in arms who sees a silver ball. Though unequal in their powers of understanding, each person is satisfied by the same object.

Never content with passive admiration, Lichtenberg strove to assimilate and adapt the techniques which impressed him. Even though he himself shared the concerns of the Royal Society, and even though the experiments in astronomy, mathematics, and mechanics ridiculed in Book III of Gulliver were connected with his own research, he could appreciate Swift's brilliance, and the sophistication of his satire. Bonaventura parallels this attitude. While he deftly employs Swift's satiric techniques, he also incorporated the scientific insights of the eighteenth century into his work.

Swift's influence is especially noticeable in Lichtenberg's early satiric sketches and fragments, before he encountered the storms of criticism which were raised by the acerbic manner of Swift. Though much admired in its English context, Swift's scathing raillery was not appreciated when transposed into the German environment, where petty courts and

regulations, general supervision and censorship, stifled all criticism of public affairs. These constrictions may be one reason why many of Lichtenberg's planned satires never progressed beyond outlines and disconnected notes.

The earliest of these fragments was probably written in 1768 or shortly after, and consists merely of a two-page "Introduction by the Translator" for a work to be called Lorenz Eschenheimers empfindsame Reise nach Laputa.¹⁴ Both the title and the reference to the translator show clearly that Lichtenberg was consciously working in the tradition of English eighteenth-century satire, in particular that of Swift and Sterne, for "empfindsame Reise" is the German for "sentimental journey," and the voyage to Laputa starts Part III of Gulliver.

Much of the general plan can be surmised by the many literary allusions in the full title, and it is further outlined in the opening sentence:

Educated society has regretted for a long time
and with good reason that the famed Lemuel
Gulliver has not made more strenuous efforts
during his visits to Laputa and Lagado to

¹⁴ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 610-11, and Kommentar zu Band III, pp. 292-93. "Lorenz Eschenheimers empfindsame Reise nach Laputa. Schreiben des Herrn x³ + dx⁵ddy Trullrub, Ältesten der Akademie zu Lagado, das Empfindsame im Reisen zu Wasser und zu Lande und im zu Hause sitzen betreffend. Aus dem Hochbalnibarischen übersetzt von M. S."

arrange a link between the Academy there and one in Europe.

Gulliver's third journey was even less popular in Germany than in England. Not many were able to decode the allusions and implications of this menippean excursion into fantasy, and comparatively few were familiar with this part of Gulliver's adventures, which was more often than not left out of translations altogether. Lichtenberg's fragment refers to Gulliver's promise to one of the scientists in the Academy of Lagado, "if ever I had the good fortune to return to my native country, that I would do him justice" (Part III, Chapt.v).

The subtitle gives further clues in condensed form. It announces that the work is a "Manuscript of $x^3 + dx^5$ ddy Trullrub, Esq., senior of the Academy of Lagado, concerning Sentimental Journeys across Oceans and Continents and while Staying at Home. Translated from the Highbalnibaric by M. S." One must recall Gulliver's experience, especially in Chapter v, in order to read any meaning into these words. Lichtenberg demonstrates here the high demands he makes of his readers, from whom he expects familiarity with great authors in considerable detail.

The initials M. S. have not been decoded, but probably stand for Martinus Scriblerus, for the

satire uses Swift's territory of Laputa and Balnibari. Even the short exposition makes it quite clear, however, that though Lichtenberg appropriates Swift's methods--especially his technique of manipulating double meaning and linguistic ambiguities--he intended to pursue his own original ideas, and to draw on a variety of sources.¹⁵ The ending ". . . ddy" is not German and is therefore a further indication of English inspiration. The root signs are explained by the translator as indicating moral or abstract meaning for the word they precede, the root power changes the meaning from, for example, Zorr, a nice and virtuous woman to Zorr², a whore, or from molom, a scholar to molom² a windbag. This explanation leaves the reader to deduce the significance of ³ and ⁵. To add to the multiplicity of meanings, the fictitious translator claims to have

¹⁵ The subtitle is an instance of Lichtenberg's technique of blending different sources, for which Bonaventura also shows a particular predilection. It acknowledges not only indebtedness to English models, but also to a brilliant German satirist, Christian Reuter (1665-after 1702) who wrote a Journal of Schelmuffky's Curious and very Dangerous Journeys Across Oceans and Continents which lampoons the pretensions of both those who go on Grand Tours, and those who have to stay at home, and make up for their lack of experience by lively imagination. Christian Reuter. Schelmuffskys wahrhaftige curiose und sehr gefährliche Reisebeschreibung zu Wasser und Lande. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1977. First printed in 1696 in the fictitious town of Schelmrode under the pretence that Schelmuffsky was the author, and the editor was a certain E. S.

obtained the manuscript with considerable trouble from a Dutch herring-fisher. The information seems arbitrary and gratuitous unless one remembers Gulliver's enemy, a Dutchman and "malicious reprobate," who caused him to "be set adrift in a small canoe," thereby initiating his adventures in Part III. Ambiguity is achieved by the fact that Gulliver himself travelled for some time in the guise of a Dutchman, or as he himself says "a Hollander, because my intentions were for Japan, and I knew the Dutch were the only Europeans permitted to enter into that kingdom."¹⁶ The herring fisher with the manuscript could therefore be the disguised Gulliver himself or else his implacable enemy, which invites two completely opposed interpretations of the pages which have been thus obtained. Not content with these complications, the translator archly explains that he himself could only understand the meaning with greatest difficulty thanks to his knowledge of Japanese to which the Balnibaric language shows certain affinities.

The short fragment proves that Lichtenberg had thought about Swift's satire and its implications in considerable detail, that he made skillful use of

¹⁶ Gulliver's Travels, Part III, Chapt. i, Chapt. ix, pp. 198-99.

Swift's techniques, and that he equalled if not surpassed Swift in demands on the reader's own initiative and erudition. It also demonstrates Lichtenberg's gift for compressing complicated thoughts by frequent and deliberate use of allusions and associations.

Leibniz and his vision of mechanisation and a universal language Swift ridicules by having Gulliver inspect an engine at the Grand Academy of Lagado (Chapt.v), "so contrived, that the words shifted into new places, as the square bits of wood moved upside down." ¹⁷ Lichtenberg held a very different opinion of this philosopher, whose works he owned in the original Latin (Nos. 427, 1345 -49). He studied them with interest and approval (A 12), and was led by them to acquire the habit of analysing his own ideas and their origin as far as humanly possible. Nevertheless he used the mechanical engine, with which Swift ridiculed Leibniz and his attempts to define a universal language, in his satiric fragments. This so-called Kurbelmethode occurs also in an outline for a satire on mindlessness, which was

¹⁷ Gullivers Travels, Part III, Chapt. v, pp. 180-84.

printed posthumously but cannot be dated, as no manuscript has survived.¹⁸

Just before Gulliver is introduced to the professor of "speculative learning" who invented the language machine, the very one to whom he promised to do justice if ever he returned to his native land, "a man born blind" is pointed out to him, "who had several apprentices in his own condition: their employment was to mix colours for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling." The endeavor may appear ludicrous, especially when reported in Swift's sardonic matter-of-fact manner. Similar experiments were, however, actually carried out, especially by Robert Boyle (1627-1691), with whose works Lichtenberg was, of course, familiar (Nos. 190-92, 724, 816). Boyle was motivated by the same considerations which later turned Locke's attention to people born blind, for by their reactions it was hoped to learn more about the mechanism of the human mind, and how far its imagery is acquired through the senses.

¹⁸ Promies, Vol. III, p. 613. This short fragment is called "Beiträge zur Geschichte des ***." The title, "Contributions to the History of ***," points to Fielding's influence and is further proof of Lichtenberg's habit tendency to blend and superimpose intellectual experiences which were of special importance to him.

Lichtenberg's interest in blindness is shown by various notes. They are brief unemotional references to a medical case, or to a learned publication, which reveal detached scientific concern with the problem.¹⁹ This he extended also to the reactions of those born deaf, both human beings and animals, asking himself: "Are there examples of animals born deaf? Deaf dogs can hardly be expected to be mute" (K 415). How far the senses were dependent on each other and on environmental stimuli, was one of the questions which eighteenth-century science tried to elucidate, and it was hoped that those born without one or more of the senses could provide, or at least advance the answers. Bonaventura transposes this scientific concern into existential dimensions, and consistently likens the lot of mankind in general to someone born blind into an environment in which he cannot orientate himself properly, and compares the few who begin to perceive more clearly with Homer, Oedipus and Ugolino, who have been blinded by unbearable sights.

In his later satires Lichtenberg continued to practice complex techniques, but he concealed his methods and sources much more than in the Empfindsame Reise nach Laputa. The fragment was only published

¹⁹ See D 296, D 395, D 639, D 641, F 1209, J 1664.

posthumously, and he did not pursue the ideas in it any further. Whether he ever intended to do so is not clear. In a survey of the various satirical plans which Lichtenberg never expanded, Gerhard Sauder suggests that the undemarcated contours of such fragments serve in themselves as special devices to stimulate the imagination, and are a pointer to the open-endedness and fluidity of truth as such.²⁰

Lichtenberg's satiric plans, like Swift's fictitious titles, serve to suggest a certain train of thought, but leave it to the reader's imagination to supply the probable contents of the non-existent book.²¹ The method has the advantage of introducing the outrageous without actually mentioning anything indecorous. It serves also to include a wide range of other thoughts with the utmost economy of expression. The same end is served by Bonaventura's version of a non-existent work--the rejected Tragedy Man which Kreuzgang finds in the garret where the poor poet committed suicide. Only the "Prologue by the Clown" is quoted (p. 137); the tragedy itself having to be imagined by the reader. Like Gulliver,

²⁰ Gerhard Sauder, "Lichtenbergs ungeschriebene Romane." Photorin, I, 1979, pp. 3-14, p. 13.

²¹ e.g. Gulliver's Travels et al: "A Tale of a Tub," p. 278: "Treatises wrote by the same Author, most of them mentioned in the following Discourses, which will be speedily published . . ."

having to be imagined by the reader. Like Gulliver, and the Hack in the Tale of a Tub, the Clown is by no means identical with the author, but provides the perspective for the Prologue. This is also the case with Photorin, the satiric persona to whom Lichtenberg attributed his first, anonymously published satire Timorus (1773).²² Lichtenberg also employed fictitious titles and supported his satiric arguments, like Swift, by the authority of non-existent learned volumes.²³ In Timorus he bases his case on ancient legal records of his own invention.

While some of Lichtenberg's satirical fragments might have been written merely to highlight and outline a problem, others show clearly that he had a longer and more coherent satire in mind. To this group belongs a short unfinished piece simply entitled "Christopher Seng," and several entries in Notebook B which are connected with it.²⁴ The brief

²² Promies, Vol. III, pp. 205-36.

²³ Gulliver's Travels et al., pp. 349, and 390.

²⁴ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 608-609. See also B 319, B 320, and a fragmentary preface in B 321, which does not specifically refer to "Christoph Seng," but seems to belong to the general conception behind it, and concentrates on a thought which foreshadows the Sixth Nightwatch, both in the wish: "could I cry out aloud and my words had the penetration of the trumpet on the Day of Judgment," and in the conclusion, that though thousands would hear, few if any would respond.

synopsis of less than a page and a half takes Christopher Seng to the university, involves him in theology, law and mathematics, brings him into contact with high society as tutor to a nobleman's son, and with low life when he works as a sailor, then a soldier, then a small shopkeeper. The outline does not follow the ascending development of the Bildungsroman, with its pattern of ever widening circles of perception, and the ending which reconciles the hero with his fate, and offers him meaning in life.

Christopher Seng is endowed from the beginning with insights that are deeper, and feelings that are more responsive and rational than those of others, and like Kreuzgang he has to pay for these gifts with increasing alienation from his fellow men. Various other themes from the Nightwatches are also interwoven: Christopher loses his reason due to an unhappy love affair, but recovers to take on a new but humble position. Like Kreuzgang he forfeits his job by arguing against public opinion; he defends a peasant accused of adultery, but the mob, which pays ardent lip service to Christian doctrine, cannot follow Christ's example.

Exposition of the plot is followed by two succinct character sketches. In the first and more

extended one, Christopher Seng's thoughts and feelings are likened to two persons who have nothing to do with each other. What Bakhtin sees first manifested in the *menippea*, and calls "moral-physiological experimentation: a representation of the unusual, abnormal, moral and psychic states of man--insanity of all sorts (the theme of the maniac), split personality,"²⁵ turned for Lichtenberg into a life-long preoccupation with duality.²⁶ For him, in the tradition of the enlightenment, these mental states were not abnormal, but merely extreme manifestations of the human condition, which could be studied with their help as if observed through a magnifying glass.

Christoph was Lichtenberg's own Christian name, and the complicated personality exhibits unmistakable traits of himself. Seng is not a common family name, but the stem of the verb sengen: to singe, scorch, burn. Thus the name indicates that the work was not intended as a novel, but a satire. Lichtenberg himself suggests this interpretation. He coupled the word sengen with Swift when he admonished aspiring

²⁵ Bakhtin, Problems, p. 116.

²⁶ Albert Schneider, "Le Double Prince. Un important emprunt de E. T. A. Hoffmann a G. C. Lichtenberg." Annales Universitatis Saraviensis, Lettres, Sarrebruck, IV, 1953, pp. 292-99.

German writers who were simply copying the idiosyncrasies of famous men without understanding their craft or their intentions. While Bonaventura ridicules the poet who is content with "Kant's nose, Goethe's eyes, Lessing's forehead, Schiller's mouth and the backside of several famous men" (p. 179), Lichtenberg delivers the same message rather more directly:

Do you imagine you would earn any thanks by writing, for instance, in synoptic sentences, by swearing and reviling like Shakespeare, playing the lyre like Sterne, singeing and burning like Swift, or playing the trumpet like Pindar? I am not saying that really writing like Shakespeare, Sterne, Swift and Pindar would fail to have any effect; in that case you might move an honest soul here and there, but just to swear and revile, play the lyre, singe and burn will achieve nothing. (D 610)

Swift and his islands in Book III of Gulliver also inspired Lichtenberg's plan of a satire on "The Island Zezu."²⁷ Notes to this purpose are jotted down without coherence, but their organizing principle is revealed by the first sentence:

The reason why this island has been left unrecorded for so long is that the strange customs of the inhabitants suggested to publishers everywhere that a description of it would really be a satire on their own country. I was well aware that there are parts of the body of which one does not like to write. But that there are such countries, who would have thought that? (D 78)

²⁷ D 78, 82, 86, 116, 136, 152, 165, 166, 181.

Lichtenberg goes on to describe an academy of sciences that recalls Swift's learned institution in Lagado, and here as there the operator of a mechanical device is distinguished by the title professor. Automation is equated with mindless copying, and this theme is developed through highly sophisticated puppets--robots in modern language. Their creators lived in ages long past, and though they are universally revered, nobody has ever thought of preserving their knowledge or studying their methods (D 116). Thus the puppet-imagery relates to the eighteenth-century controversy of ancients versus moderns, with which Swift deals in his Battle of the Books.

The puppet theme connects D 116 with the Nightwatches, and so does an abrupt remark that is not explained any further: "At funerals, nightwatchmen."²⁸ Another concurrent theme is the odeum of Pericles, which the good people of Zezu had erected on a mountain half a mile outside their town. This was filled with statues, and learned professors could dress these up as their adversaries and rage against them if they felt inclined to fight (D 181). In the Nightwatches the "invalid's home of immortal

²⁸ Promies, Vol. I, p. 248: "Bei Leichenbegängen, Nachtwächter."

gods" is a similar odeum placed likewise just outside town (p. 191 and 193). The problem of suicide, never far from Lichtenberg's mind, was also to be discussed in the proposed satire (D 165), as were the irreconcilable demands of body and mind:

The preface could start with bread and immortality, the two focal points towards which the mind gravitates with its satellite the body, or the body with its satellite, the mind.

(D 166)

The paradoxical duality of these conflicting motivations is also a leitmotif of the Nightwatches. But while Swift, with the accent on the body, envisages the struldbruggs, who cannot die and remain tied to a deteriorating physical presence in perpetuity, Bonaventura transfers this "dreadful prospect of never dying" (p. 206) into spiritual spheres and equates immortality with eternity.

The significance of "Zezu" is not explained. Though the word looks outlandish, it might, however, just be the phonetical rendering of the German command seh' zu: observe, look out. In a note on Zezuan history Lichtenberg declares that satires are not only legal on the island, but positively encouraged, provided that nobody is attacked who lived after the Great Flood, and even of those who were active before this time a good six or seven must be exempted from any criticism (D 86). This

persiflage of German censorship provides some probable reasons why Lichtenberg abandoned so many of his literary plans.

Not all of his satires remained plans and fragments. Those which he published during his life time under a variety of pseudonyms established him as the foremost German master of the genre. Though by no means imitations of Swift, his powerful influence is strongly evident in them.

Brief and to the point is the "Handbill in the name of Philadelphia."²⁹ Written and distributed in Göttingen in 1777 as an anonymous sheet, it ridiculed a celebrated magician who called himself after the New World town in which he claimed to have been born. Imposters, such as the outrageous self-styled Count Cagliostro (1743-95)--an almost exact contemporary of Lichtenberg--found, the enlightenment notwithstanding, credit in highest society and they abused their privileges deplorably. Philadelphia, too, had dazzled the credulous. That the people of Göttingen, with so much learning in their midst, should know no better than to fall prey to his promises activated Lichtenberg's satiric instincts.

²⁹ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 253-55: "Anschlag-Zettel im Namen von Philadelphia."

He produced an advertisement for the magician, praising his extraordinary powers with litotic ambiguity. His friend Dieterich printed the handbill with types that had been out of use for a considerable time to conceal the origin of the bill, and the plan resulted in perfect success. Philadelphia left town in a hurry, though a performance was still outstanding for which a large sum had already been subscribed.³⁰

Mautner calls the distribution of this anonymous handbill a Humanistenstreich, a learned prank. He draws attention, however, to a close resemblance with Swift's short satire "The wonders of all the wonders that ever the world wondered at" (1721). The affinity had first been noted by Jean Paul,³¹ who was himself an admirer of Swift, though he changed his genre from the satire--for which resonance was largely lacking in the German miniature states--to the novel.³²

³⁰ Promies, Kommentar zu Band III, pp. 101-107. For a detailed account of the affair, Promies quotes a letter of Dieterich to Lichtenberg's brother Ludwig Christian.

³¹ Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes, p. 165, p. 172.

³² Wulf Köpke, Erfolglosigkeit. Zum Frühwerk Jean Pauls (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1977), pp. 105 and 404.

Lichtenberg's text starts with high praise of the world-renowned magician, followed by the announcement of his arrival by mailcoach--implying he could have travelled through the air, had he but chosen to do so. A description of his rather dreary repertory follows, includeing the promise that

he will collect all the watches, rings and jewels from the audience, and if people insist on it, their money as well. Everybody will obtain a receipt. He will then heap everything into a case and depart with it. Eight days later every one has to tear up their receipt. No sooner is that accomplished, lo and behold, watches, rings and jewels will be there. This trick has earned him lots of money.

The ambiguous "there" is the only pointer to the true nature of the proposed miracle. The art of deceiving through words which are open to different interpretations is the stock-in-trade of tricksters and charlatans, and both Swift and Lichtenberg studied their methods and profited from them.

Swift's similar satire succeeds by comparable means. After announcing that the "famous artist John Emanuel Schoits" has newly arrived in town, a list of wonders he will perform is enumerated without comment. It includes miracles like this:

He likewise draws the teeth of half a dozen Gentlemen; mixes and jumbles them in a hat; gives any person leave to blindfold him, while he returns each their own, and fixes

them as well as ever.³³

Lichtenberg claims a similar miracle for Philadelphia, but refines the procedure:

he gently extracts the teeth of three or four ladies, asks the assembly to mix them carefully in a bag, inserts them into a small cannon, shoots them unto the ladies heads and behold, each has her teeth again, clean and white as before.

Swift's ideas are used, but not copied. The inutility of the promised miracles is used to expose their absurdity. When Lichtenberg informs us that his magician has to use the normal means of conveyance, and Swift emphasizes that his will collect for "the first seat a British Crown, the second a British Half-Crown, and the lowest a British Shilling," both authors really state that such performers are incapable of working miracles.

Much of what Lichtenberg learned from Swift was put to brilliant use in his first published satire Timorus (1773), Greek for defender. As the subtitle explains, this is "The Defence of Two Israelites who, impelled by the strength of Lavater's proofs and the Göttingen pork sausages, have accepted the true faith, by Conrad Photirin, Candidate of Theology and Belles Lettres."³⁴ Though Photirin is Greek for

³³ Kommentar zu Band III gives the full text of Swift's satire, pp. 104-105.

³⁴ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 205-36.

Lichtenberg, Conrad Photorin is not an authorial pseudonym. The eager young theologian, with his narrow outlook, has a personality distinctly different from that of the real author. His fumbling incompetence turns his defense of any cause into litotic attack, and the lines of combat are drawn with an ambiguity which obliges the reader constantly to reorient himself. With Photorin, Lichtenberg adopts the Swiftian solution of letting his antiheroes condemn themselves.³⁵

Creating a satiric persona for such a purpose is a technique which Swift frequently employed. When he attacks in "The Bickerstaff Papers" the practice of filling almanacs with gloomy and sensational but conjectural predictions, he does so through the putative author Bickerstaff, who claims to be himself an astrologer. For this reason, Swift's spokesman "could not possibly lay the fault upon the art, but upon those gross impostors, who set up to be the artists."³⁶ Faulting the practitioners rather than the discipline is also Kreuzgang's approach to problems. Where Goethe's Faust blames philosophy,

³⁵ On this technique see Ronald Paulson, Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 103.

³⁶ Jonathan Swift, Bickerstaff Papers and Pamphlets on the Church. Ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940), pp. 139-50.

medicine, law, and theology as useless to his purpose (Faust I, 354-59), for Kreuzgang philosophers, scholars, theologians are the culprits (p. 103), and in Timorus it is the hypocritical practice of religion which is ridiculed, not religion itself. In the "Apology" to his Tale of a Tub Swift makes the same point, stressing that he intends "to expose the abuses and corruptions in Learning and Religion."³⁷

The immediate occasion for the satire were Lavater's endeavors to convert the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn to Christianity in 1769. Mendelssohn declined with a tact and modesty which won him universal sympathy, but Lavater persisted nevertheless with his proselytizing. The incident turned into a cause célèbre, for it was the first time in Germany that the moral victory in a public religious debate had gone to a Jew.

Refusing to accept defeat, Lavater christened two other Jews in Berlin and attributed their conversion to the power of his arguments in the Mendelssohn controversy.³⁸ In the same year two Jews in Göttingen also embraced Christianity. Their moral fibre differed so strongly from that of Mendelssohn, with whom Lichtenberg was on personal and friendly

³⁷ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 286.

³⁸ Kommentar zu Band III, pp. 82 ff.

terms, that Lichtenberg's satire was activated. Both converts were vagrants, one a convicted felon, and their change of religion was widely attributed to hopes for social and economic, rather than celestial advantages. In defending these men and their sincerity, Photorin uses litotes to ridicule Lavater's missionary zeal. His main target is, however, the general hypocrisy of confessing and praising a genuine change of heart which is neither practised nor expected.

Religion emptied of its spiritual content is also the theme of A Tale of a Tub, with which Timorus has many parallels. Swift represents God as a father who bequeaths to his three sons identical coats with very precise instructions. They are under no circumstances to alter them or to adapt them to any fashions. Peter represents Roman catholics, Martin the Church of England, Jack the dissenters, and the tale of their disobedience and quarrels is the story of Christian, and--by implication--human folly. It is told in a menippean mixture of narration, reflection, and digressions, which culminates in "A Digression in Praise of Digressions".³⁹ "An Apology," a "Postscript," a letter "To the Right Honourable John Lord Somers," an address by "The

³⁹ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 356.

Bookseller to the Reader," the "Epistle dedicatory to His Royal Highness Prince Posterity," and finally "The Preface" introduce the Tale of a Tub. This planned confusion is a deliberate ploy to involve the reader and supply him with different, sometimes conflicting perspectives, while at the same time it satirizes the over-extended contemporary use of dedications. As Timorus is much shorter than the Tale, it only has two introductions where Swift uses six. One of these is a dedication, signed by Photorin, "To Oblivion," who is addressed as a great and mighty queen, and thus evokes associations to Swift's Prince Posterity as well as of Queen Dullness of Pope's Dunciad. The other is a preface by the editor in the form of a letter to the reader. Both introductions denigrate through inappropriate praise, and thus take up the main theme of the satire from the beginning.

The similarity of Her Majesty Oblivion to Swift's Prince Posterity has not escaped attention.⁴⁰ Parallels also exist between Lichtenberg's "Introduction by the Editor" and Swift's address of "The Bookseller to the Reader." Both serve to distance the real as well as the pretended author from the reading public, and to commend the work from

⁴⁰ Kommentar zu Band III, p. 84 (note to p. 206).

the viewpoint of a person who disclaims all responsibility for its contents, yet has a natural interest in its promotion. Sophisticated subtleties, based on a penetrating intellect and a thorough mastery of rhetoric, abound in Swit's and Lichtenberg's satires. Bonaventura's text has to be read on the same level to reveal its interlocking and multi-layered meaning, and its intentional ambiguities.

Timorus takes the form of a sermon, and the imaginary congregation is apostrophised occasionally. Idiomatic references to the devil--characteristic of Lichtenberg's style as of Bonaventura's--fit quite naturally into the pseudo-theological context. Direct and indirect use of Bible quotations is rather more conspicuous in Timorus than in Lichtenberg's other writings, which suggests a deliberate effort to strengthen the illusion of a theological author. The printed form of the sermon is a further parody of Lavater, whose preaching was for a time so fashionable that his unedited words were rushed into print.

In harmony with the theological tone and with Lavater's well-known habits, Timorus ends with overflowing assurances of selfless good will and the final exhortation "Grow in Faith." Faith is here

substituted for the "grace" in 2 Peter XIII, 18. While the sermon thus ends on an authentic note, the colloquial usage of the German Glaube--faith--in the sense of uncritical acceptance is also brought into play.

Enthusiasts, those who are carried away by their inspirations and wishful thinking, are an aversion which Lichtenberg and Bonaventura share with Swift. The Dean applied the term mainly to religious dissenters, Lichtenberg and Bonaventura, writing after the secularizing process which took place during the eighteenth century, to poets.

In the Tale of a Tub Swift satirizes such people mainly in the person of Jack, especially in Section IX, the "Digression on Madness," and in Section VIII, which leads up to it and contains a discourse or digression on wind. Here Swift introduces variations on Burton's "Digression of Air,"⁴¹ exploring all connotations of the word, from spirit and anima mundi to inflatus and belching, and he plays on sophisms such as "Words are but wind; and learning is nothing but words; ergo, learning is nothing but wind."⁴²

The digressions in the Tale of a Tub add elements of constant uncertainty and surprise to the

⁴¹ Burton, pp. 407-438.

⁴² Gulliver's Travels et al, p. 362.

witty, but somewhat predictable parable of the three coats. While they inform the reader they also disorient him, which is precisely what Swift wants to achieve, as it is the satirist's aim "to give form to the shifting ambiguities and complexities of unidealized existence."⁴³ Not satisfied merely to confront his readers with these, Swift manipulates the menippean conventions to force his public into intellectual and moral decisions.

The first of the digressions--Lichtenberg translates the term with Ausschweifung⁴⁴--concerns critics, writers on whom the enlightenment, Lichtenberg included, focussed much attention. Satire is a genre particularly interested in pedigrees, partly to parody human self-agrandisement, but also to establish a link with tradition, to extend the allegorical dimension, and to alert the reader to a multiplicity of implications. In this spirit Swift describes the background for

the TRUE CRITIC, whose original is the most ancient of all. Every true critic is a hero born, descending in a direct line from a celestial stem by Momus and Hybris, who begat Zoilus, who begat Tigellius, who begat Etcetera the Elder; who begat Bentley, and

⁴³ Frye, p. 223.

⁴⁴ Promies, Vol. III, p. 229.

Rymer, and Wotton, and Perrault, and Dennis, who begat Etcetera the Younger.⁴⁵

The passage only makes sense to those familiar with the names it mentions. Lichtenberg read, digested and remembered it, for he used ideas from it in his commentary to the first print of Hogarth's Rake's Progress (1796). Speaking of the Rake's recklessness with his inheritance, he first refers to the disregard of the three brothers in the Tale of a Tub towards their father's last will, and then remarks that whatever an Etcetera I has hoarded, an Etcetera II will invariably squander. Context and wording are adapted to Lichtenberg's own purpose, but the connection with the Tale of a Tub is preserved by a footnote in which Lichtenberg attributes the expression to Swift.⁴⁶

Swift's device of quoting learned and weighty sources of his own invention may burlesque Burton and his constant references, frequently to quite obscure and inaccessible documents, but it is also a useful distancing device. Thus Swift's digression on wind is introduced by the bold claim: "The learned Aeolists maintain the original cause of all things to be wind." Aeolists are soon exposed by the Hack's

⁴⁵ Gulliver's Travels et al., Section III, p. 329.

⁴⁶ Promies, Vol. III, p. 823.

litotes as pretenders to inspiration, in plain words windbags. The chapter warns against imagination and idealism divorced from reality, and corresponds therefore to the Eighth Nightwatch, where the fate of the poor poet epitomizes the same theme. His lofty aspirations are parabolized as well as satirized by his abode "high up over the city in a free garret," where he "ruled . . . so high in the airways" (p. 29).

Bonaventura follows Swift and Lichtenberg in the use of metaphors which are taken from daily life and from immediate personal experience to illustrate abstract concepts. All three are masters in sustaining such imagery through many variations. In the Tale of a Tub Swift already uses sleep in the metaphorical sense of the Nightwatches.⁴⁷ When his Hack informs the reader "I wake when others sleep and sleep when others wake," he is not talking of his personal routine, but of attitudes to life, and like the nightwatchman he claims to perform this task for the benefit of others.

Clothes metaphors are the special hallmark of the Tale of a Tub. They explain the superficiality, changeability and hypocrisy of human behaviour.

⁴⁷ Adelung's definition of "Nachtwache" is a watch that protects the sleep of others.

Details like embroidery, fringes, and gold lace are introduced to deepen the analogy. All these similes lead to the question: "What is man himself but a microcoat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings?"⁴⁸ Lichtenberg admired this technique of expressing abstractions in everyday language. A plan for a satire, sketched out on December 20th, 1773 begins with the suggestion:

Writing an allegory on the present state of criticism using gardens in the way Swift does clothes in A Tale of a Tub might work quite well. (D 214)

In using clothes metaphors when speaking of Swift's works, he pays homage to his special genius as well as to the brilliant imagery in the Tale of a Tub:

Swift certainly often dresses the children of his imagination strangely enough, so that they can hardly be distinguished from clowns and acrobats; however the materials, trimmings and stones he uses are always genuine. (G 121)

Literary criticism, which figures so prominently in the Nightwatches, was one of Lichtenberg's persistent concerns, for like the English writers of the eighteenth century from Addison to Johnson he realised the importance of the critic in shaping public opinion, and he deplored any misuse of this influential office. In the Nightwatches literary criticism plays also an important part, and so does

⁴⁸ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 379, pp. 321-22.

an inhabitant of Grub Street. Lichtenberg was so familiar with this place that he thought of ways to translate its meaning into German (C 75 and D 148). The concept was still alien to the German situation, where writing was not yet an accepted profession. In Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, which started the German trend of artists as protagonists, the hero never can travel in search of inspiration and, following his lead, painters and writers in German romantic fiction wandered in search of new horizons with little concern for those drab necessities of life which dominated the frustrating existence of the house-bound Grub Street inhabitants.

As late as 1839 the picture of a Poor Poet in an attic, Karl Spitzweg's Der arme Poet, caused an outcry when it was first exhibited in Munich. It took many years before the public was reconciled to the subject and the painting became a general favorite. But in English eighteenth-century literature, Swift's Hack is only one of innumerable predecessors of Bonaventura's poor poet.

Bonaventura not only uses themes from The Tale of a Tub, and shares its dominant concern with unmasking human pretensions, but he also employs the imagery of Swift's satire. Clothes metaphors are handled with skill and imagination, notably to

characterize the poet who wrote "to leading spirits for old cast-off clothes," and decks himself out with Kant's shoes, Goethe's hat and Schiller's sleeping cap (p. 179). To all this, he adds Lessing's wig, a part of human attire which Swift neglected, but which Lichtenberg freely uses in Swift's manner (L 4).

Hair-pieces feature prominently in Lichtenberg's controversial "Fragment concerning Tails."⁴⁹ In this travesty of Lavater's physiognomical procedure, tails from pigs to wigs are analysed to deduce the character of the owner in language which parodies Lavater's incoherent rhapsodies. An indelicate double meaning is introduced by silhouettes of so-called student's tails, most of them in the shape of hair pieces, but some unmistakably phallic. This spirited lampoon was published in 1783 without Lichtenberg's consent or knowledge, and much to his embarrassment, for he had written it in 1777 strictly for the private amusement of some intimate friends. Many readers recoiled--at least in their public reactions--and the publication impaired Lichtenberg's reputation as a serious scholar.

Swift's corporeal analogies are by no means all of this suggestive nature. Thus the "Digression in Praise of Digressions" is introduced by the claim

⁴⁹ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 533-38.

that "the commonwealth of learning is chiefly obliged to the great modern improvement of digressions: the late refinements in knowledge, running parallel to those of diet in our nation, which among men of a judicious taste are dressed up in various compounds, consisting in soups and olios, fricassees, and ragouts." Allusions to diet recur in the Academy of Lagado, where Gulliver is introduced to a novel method of learning:

The proposition and demonstration were fairly written on a thin wafer, with ink composed of a cephalic tincture. This the student was to swallow upon a fasting stomach, and for three days following eat nothing, but bread and water. As the wafer digested, the tincture mounted to his brain, bearing the proposition along with it.⁵⁰

Bonaventura uses the same imagery, almost the same words, but employs them in an extended and higher context. Considering the stomach as the "connecting canal of spirits" he declares "through it they ascend as vapours into the head, after the animal part has in turn gone its way." The link with Swift's eating and reading metaphor is then reestablished, because Kreuzgang goes on to observe that from this "it is as plain as day that we can absorb the great wise men, a Plato, Hemsterhuis, Kant, et al. in ourselves merely by contentedly eating our way into them" (p. 187).

⁵⁰ Gulliver, Part III, Chapt. v.

Mechanically acquired learning is a traditional target of satire. The attack on legal abuses are an even more integral part of the genre. In Timorus Lichtenberg displays his skill in this field, and demonstrates that his wit is distilled from thorough acquaintance with laws and legal proceedings. He quotes from an ancient legal code of his own invention to prove why only minor criminals are ever prosecuted, and establishes on this authority that the converted Jew with the prison record must be a harmless offender. The argument is syllogistically pursued on several levels and conducted throughout in a brilliant parody of archaic legalese.⁵¹ T h e fictional records report that when long ago law was applied with strict regard to justice, the prisons were soon overflowing. To save the system it was finally agreed that only petty offenders and poor devils--a favorite expression of Lichtenberg as of Bonaventura--should be sent to jail.

Lichtenberg dissected problems as relentlessly as Swift. Not only back to their origins, however, but also forward to their future implications. His conclusions often resulted, therefore, in surprisingly accurate forecasts, as has become clear only in recent times, though his contemporaries

⁵¹ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 215 ff.

usually regarded his prophesying as inspired whimsy. In Timorus he arrived at the chilling thought, "If ever (and who can tell whether that will not be the case one day) criminals will outnumber us, then we will be put into prisons."⁵² Bonaventura likewise considers the possibility that "in a state full of nothing but thieves, honesty alone would have to be punished with the rope" (p. 129).

Mistrust of systems is another of Lichtenberg's prime concerns which he shares with the English eighteenth-century satirists and with Bonaventura. Thus Kreuzganz remarks about the mad world creator:

It is almost dangerous for us other fools to have to tolerate this titan among us, for he has his consistent system just as well as Fichte, and basically has an even smaller opinion of man than the latter. (p. 153)

Lichtenberg's aversion against systems stemmed from the conviction that as long as they are based on insufficient knowledge, they are bound to be faulty and therefore an impediment to any further progress of understanding. His satire is also directed against intellectuals who misuse their learning.

In Gulliver's Travels Swift lashes out at what he assumes are "mistakes in natural philosophy," and says "that new systems of nature were but new fashions, which would vary in every age; and even

⁵² Promies, Vol. III, p. 216.

those who pretend to demonstrate them from mathematical principles would flourish but a short period of time, and be out of vogue when that was determined."⁵³ Lichtenberg's position was similar.

In his last notebook he wrote about political systems, surmising that mankind would rush for ever from one order into another (L 34). Occasion for this remark was a book which had impressed him enough to record the date of reading, October 28th, 1796. This was Der politische Tierkreis, oder die Zeichen der Zeit by Huergelmer, and it seems to have been a political satire in which human beings were compared with animals, much in the manner of the "Prologue to the Tragedy: Man," where the Clown claims that "most men . . . acquire in their physiognomies a striking racial resemblance with birds of prey, as for instance vultures, hawks, etc;" and that "the older aristocracy is sooner able to trace its pedigrees to the beasts of prey than to apes" (p. 139).

Like Swift and Lichtenberg, Kreuzgang cannot put his trust in human leadership, systems or institutions. He perceives the faults and flaws in human reasoning all too clearly, and the self-satisfied confidence around him fills him with grave

⁵³ Gulliver's Travels, Book III, Chapt. vii, p. 194.

foreboding. He sees himself surrounded by uncertainties and trusts in nothing.

"Nothing" is also the theme on which Swift ends his tale: "I am now trying an experiment very frequent among Modern authors; which is to write upon Nothing; when the subject is utterly exhausted to let the pen still move on; by some called the ghost of wit, delighting to walk after the death of its body." Further variations on this theme raise the suspicion that the author may really be embarrassed to find the final words, when he suddenly connects his digression on the writer's predicament to the very essence of his discourse, the quest for meaning in life:

The conclusion of a treatise resembles the conclusion of human life, which hath sometimes been compared to the end of a feast; where few are satisfied to depart. ⁵⁴

The Clown's "Prologue" ends much like Swift's Tale of a Tub: the serious purpose behind the frills becomes suddenly apparent, and the seeming irrelevancies assume unexpected significance. They are revealed as froth on the surface which hides the great issues of life and death, destiny and eternity from immediate view, because they would be too painful to envision:

The death's head is never missing behind the ogling mask and life is only the cap and bells which the Nothing has draped around to tinkle

⁵⁴ Gulliver's Travels et al, p. 393.

with and finally to tear up fiercely and hurl from itself. (p. 141)

After the Prologue ends and the Clown departs the Ninth Nightwatch begins. Like Section IX in the Tale of a Tub it is a digression on madness. Though the use of the same chapter-number deliberately draws attention to Swift's paramount influence on Kreuzgang's Bedlam experience, the combined work of the Scriblerians has contributed significantly to Bonaventura's design. Pope and the other Scriblerians will, therefore, be discussed before Swift's connection with Bonaventura is extended to the Ninth Nightwatch.

CHAPTER VI

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744) AND THE SCRIBLERIANS.

Pope's major works were well known in Germany among the erudite, who appreciated his polished language, the accuracy of his satiric darts, and the ease of access to English philosophy which he offered, especially to the thoughts of Shaftesbury.¹ His collected works were owned by Lichtenberg in an English edition of 1764, and in German translation. The library contained also a German edition of the Essay on Criticism which included the original text (Nos. 1662-64), and an English edition of the Essay on Man. Of this there was also a German translation which included other, not further specified translations from Pope (Nos. 1381-82).

Lichtenberg admired especially Pope's ease of expression, and his gift for explaining abstract ideas in concrete and clearly understandable terms. That it was primarily this linguistic presentation which fascinated him is shown by the fact that he

¹ Price, English Literature in Germany, Chapt. v, "Pope and Philosophic Poetry," pp. 61-72.

copied various lines of Pope into his notebooks in the original English, a habit which started early in 1770 (A 135) and continued to the end of his life (L 448 and L 700).

Stimulation by Pope is suggested by the plan to write a satire in his manner, one of many satiric proposals of which only brief hints survive:

To imitate "a key to the lock." To interpret the Sorrows of Werther in relation to America or similar circumstances, or with a view to the revelations (Fata) of the Christian Religion. Inquisition in Spain. (F 332)

Such cryptic remarks do not allow accurate assessment of what Lichtenberg actually had in mind. F 332, like others of Lichtenberg's satirical outlines, could easily be taken for the whim of an idle hour. Reference to the Key to the Lock shows, however, that Lichtenberg not merely read fashionable masterpieces. He also went into their background, and familiarized himself with everything that had any bearing on them. As Pope had published A Key to the Lock in 1715 anonymously, with the satirical intent to interpret his own Rape of the Lock in a wrong and misleading way, and thus mock his detractors, the reference shows that Lichtenberg was thinking in

terms of multilevelled irony when he sketched out his compressed plan for a satire.²

The ironic pose of vindicating a work by fallacious attacks presupposes an alert and well educated audience, and Lichtenberg delighted in such intellectual challenge. Pope's pamphlet already discloses in the title a technique in which Lichtenberg himself excelled: skilful play with the different, often contradictory meanings of words, especially those which were common and frequently used. The ambiguities which can be created by dexterous verbal manipulation surprise and thus delight, but they also serve the serious purpose of inducing a fresh survey of familiar surroundings, as they induce thought and contemplation. In such a work anonymity is more than author protection, it is a literary device by which the reader is deprived of authorial guidance, and forced to decode the messages without any help.

Pope is mainly renowned for the lucid clarity of his diction and for the quotability of his couplets, which often seem effortlessly simple. His delight in ambiguities, parodies, burlesques and mystifications

² The pamphlet to which Lichtenberg referred is A Key to the Lock or a treatise proving beyond all contradiction the dangerous tendency of a late poem entitled the rape of the lock to government and religion. It was published in London, 1715.

was shared by the members of the Scriblerus Club. The originator of this select circle, and initially the driving force behind it was Pope himself, though his friend Jonathan Swift was to become the visible center of a group which included the learned and versatile Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), physician to Queen Anne; Thomas Parnell (1679-1718), author of the "Night-Piece on Death", probably the herald of the eighteenth-century graveyard poetry; John Gay (1685-1732), author of the Beggar's Opera; and Robert Harley, the first earl of Oxford (1661-1724), a prominent Tory politician and man of letters.

A Key to the Lock was written while the activities of the club were at their height, and it is likely that all Scriblerians took a hand in it.³ They had set themselves the task of "not merely ridiculing the follies of party writers, critics, editors, and commentators, but of satirizing all follies among men of learning, whether philosophers or artists, antiquarian or travelers, teachers or poets, lawyers or dancing masters." This responsibility they approached with "vigorous and

³ Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus. Written in Collaboration by the Members of the Scriblerus Club, John Arbuthnot, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, John Gay, Thomas Parnell and Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford. Ed. Charles Kerby-Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950). Introduction, p. 42 and n. 2.

skeptical common sense, . . . scorn for cant, hypocrisy and enthusiasm⁴ . . . fear of disorder and unbridled innovation . . . distrust of projectors and schematists." They possessed "exceptionally well-informed minds, . . . [an] extraordinarily rich sense of the ridiculous, . . . ingenious fancy and copious wit."⁵ Lichtenberg combined these aims and qualities, and he also shared the verbal virtuosity of these men, all of whom figure in his notes and letters.

The wit of the Scriblerus Club was too topical and intellectually demanding to attain popularity even in England, and in Germany only few were able to savor it properly. Lichtenberg highly enjoyed Dr. Arbuthnot's Law is a Bottomless Pit which later achieved fame as The History of John Bull. Already during his second stay in England he had reached the conclusion: "John Bull represents the character of the Englishman" (E 68). The same opinion is again expressed in his travelling journal, where he also notes that either Swift is the author or more likely Dr. Arbuthnot, as Swift would hardly have treated the Scots with so much fairness. Whether this was an

⁴ The word is to be taken in the eighteenth-century sense where it denotes reliance on inspiration rather than on reason and evidence.

⁵ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, Introduction, p. 73.

independent or acquired opinion, the remark witnesses to considerable familiarity with Scriblerian thoughts.⁶

The Scriblerians were especially concerned with the abuses of learning which lead to miscarriage and perversion of justice, a prime target for satire since antiquity. Their extensive use of satire as "a most effective weapon . . . against the object of their special hatred . . . law, lawyers and the legal profession" is the topic of a thesis by James Walter Carter. Their efforts in this field were significant, in that they "indirectly brought about a reform of the very abuses and corruptions prevalent in the legal processes and profession of which they wrote." ⁷

In the Nightwatches this tradition continues. Misapplications of law are satirically exposed in many instances: in the figure of the wizened old judge, in whom everything human was "erased with only the mere expression of work remaining" (p. 51); in the rally for the Last Judgement in the Sixth

⁶ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 154.

⁷ James Walter Carter, Scriblerian Satire against Law. Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts, Gainesville: University of Florida, 1958, p. 9, p. 109.

Nightwatch; in the judicial murder of the nun (p. 165-69).

Lichtenberg's own satires on the law rival those of the Scriblerians in exuberant spirit and inventiveness only in his first published satire. Later he kept largely quiet about a subject on which any controversy was severely discouraged in heavily censored Germany. That injustice nevertheless affected him strongly in the Scriblerian spirit is shown by occasional asides in his notes and letters. Thus he records:

Sometimes a sentence comes to mind first thing in the morning which then keeps recurring to the memory all day long. Thus on February 28th, 1778 I said nearly every quarter of an hour "law is a bottomless pit." (F 877)

The Scriblerian hey-days were in 1714, but while common interests inspired works which gained fame and acclaim, these were mainly published later, so Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) or Gay's Beggar's Opera (1728). The main joint effort appeared later still, when Pope included The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus in the second volume of his prose works in 1741.

The object of the satire is to expose intellectual follies in all walks of life, and Martinus satirizes those who are carefully educated, but crammed with knowledge, rather than led to

understanding. He has developed a narrow and pedantic outlook and serves admirably to demonstrate the favorite Scriblerian techniques of strategic fallacious reasoning which destroys the adversaries' argument by stretching it to absurd extensions. His companion and foil is Conrad Crambe, a born punster with "a natural disposition to sport himself with words," who prides himself on his Treatise of Syllogisms, another non-existent book that is used to satiric purpose. His glaring incompetence notwithstanding, Conrad teaches metaphysics.⁸

In Lichtenberg's Timorus the function of the glib and verbose Conradus Crambe, somebody clearly unqualified to judge, is assigned to equally shallow and self-assured Conrad Photorin. Though Conrad was the name of Lichtenberg's father, the similarity of the two satiric persona should not be overlooked, for both operate on the Scriblerian plan to ridicule by ironic praise the works and attitudes which the satire as a whole attacks.

This method had been brilliantly exercised during a Renaissance controversy in which the German scholar Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) had defended some Jews, and thereby conflicted with the authorities of the church. As it was too dangerous

⁸ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 118.

to come out openly in his defense, Epistolae obscurorum virorum appeared under various fictitious names, prominently among them one Conrad, a name so popular at the time in Germany, that it designated practically "everyman." These Letters of the Obscure Men (1515-17) prudently took up Reuchlin's cause by exaggerated support of his attackers, but with the fallacious arguments of misinformed ignorance, and in such deficient Latin that their want of a sound cause was easily exposed. By casting Conrad in a similar role, the Scriblerians seem to have acknowledged their indebtedness to the earlier satire, and Conrad Photorin stands in the same tradition.

Timorus includes a lengthy digression on Siamese twins called Helena and Judith.⁹ The same girls also appear in the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, where the taller and fair one is called Lindamira, and becomes for a short and confusing period the wife of Martinus. "The Double Mistress," as this grotesque episode is called, serves mainly to ridicule cumbersome legal procedure, for by marrying one of the sisters Martin gets inextricably involved with both, a situation which supplies lawyers and judges with ample opportunities for ingenious sophistry.¹⁰

⁹ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 225-27.

¹⁰ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, Chapt. xiv-xv.

In a firework of wit which offended many sensibilities, Martinus is legally pronounced a lawful husband, a bigamist, an adulterer, and a perpetrator of incest. The final annulment of the ill-fated union indicates the propensity of legal procedures to grind to a halt after feverish activities. Bishop Warburton omitted the whole incident from his edition of The Works of Alexander Pope in 1751.

Charles Kerby-Miller reinstated "The Double Mistress" in his 1950 edition. He traces the episode to "twins, whose names were Helena and Judith, . . . born in Szony, in Hungary, on October 26th, 1701," who were exhibited in The Hague. There the English scholar William Burnet saw them, and he "sent a description and a print of them to Sir Hans Sloane," which was read to the Royal Society on May 12th, 1708.¹¹ The Scriblerians used this case history to expose empty legal verbiage.

Conrad Photorin, true to his role as pompous and shallow theologian, names as his source the Philosophical Transactions and the controversial Treatises on the Principal Truths of Natural Religion (1754) by H. S. Reimarus, only to denigrate the learned Reimarus, whose denial of the supernatural in

¹¹ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, pp. 294-95.

religion¹² led to bitter attacks. Conrad refers to Reimarus, scholar and theologian, as a lay person, whom few theologians would read, and follows in this the Scriblerian plan for satire to denigrate the good and praise the bad. Through this satiric method Lichtenberg also accuses the adversaries of Reimarus in general of not having read his works. Through Reimarus the topos of freethinkers is introduced into Timorus. Martinus Scriblerus¹³ and the Nightwatches are likewise concerned with this theme.

The enlightened Reimarus, through the anecdote of the twins, investigated the correlation of body and soul, an aspect of the double with which Lichtenberg increasingly occupied himself. Conrad Photorin, however, interprets Reimarus on a purely superficial level, and identifies the more alert Judith with the soul, and the subdued Helena with the body. The allegory is then extended to their quarrels and disagreements, from whence Conrad returns to the main argument of his letter, the conversion by Lavater of two Jews who had been accused of having changed their religion because of a

¹² Lichtenberg used the word Fata for revelation, thereby indicating his mistrust in knowledge that cannot be verified empirically (F 332).

¹³ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, e.g., p. 138.

predilection for pork sausages, in other words for purely secular advantages. Proving through the example of the twins that body and soul are one, Conrad argues that whether something is done for the body or for the soul must needs be all the same.

In Timorus Lichtenberg's persistent preoccupation with twinning aspects showed itself for the first time. His continuing contributions to the problems of double perspectives are counted by Albert Schneider among the reasons, why he sees in Lichtenberg an important forerunner of the romantic movement.¹⁴ The episode of the two brides in the Nightwatches leads to a matrimonial outcome similar to that experienced by Martinus Scriblerius: the groom with an original choice of two girls is left with nothing. The satirical didactic purpose of the melodramatic episode is revealed in a concluding paragraph, which emphasizes, as in the complementary story of the two brothers, the repeat pattern of this human triangle:

. . . near by, youths are still singing and carousing and squander life and love and poetry in a brief swift intoxication which by morning

¹⁴ See Albert Schneider, "Le Double Prince." For further affinities between Lichtenberg and the romantics see also Albert Schneider, Lichtenberg, Précurseur du Romantisme. I, L'homme et l'oeuvre (Nancy: Société d'Impressions Typographiques, 1954). II. Lichtenberg, Penseur (Paris: Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres', n.d.), p. 162.

is dispelled--when their deeds, their dreams,
 their hopes, their wishes and everything around
 them has become sober and grown cold . . .
 (p. 163)

In *The Nightwatches* the rejected girl is merely referred to as "the white one," while her rival is alternately called "the red one" or "the rose." The distinction corresponds to that of the fair and lively Lindamore, the bride of Martinus, while in her dark sister "Indamora the Lily overcame the Rose."¹⁵ The stereotypes in both works indicate that the events are not actual but representative, and when in the *Nightwatches* the rose swoons and dies, turning from red to white herself, the symbolism of the interchanging characteristics from the tale of the two opposite brothers is once more repeated. At the same time the ludicrous elements of a neverending tragic situation are highlighted.¹⁶ The short interlude points to the affinities between Bonaventura and the Scriblerians, and compresses the full range of menippean possibilities into a few short paragraphs, from the grotesque to the profound,

¹⁵ Ed. Kerby-Miller, *Memoirs*, p. 146.

¹⁶ Cf. F 678, where Lichtenberg quotes an epigram referring to one of Queen Anne's wars
 They both did fight, they both did beat
 they both did run away,
 They both did strive to meet again
 The quite contrary way.

from literary sophistication to the rudiments of street ballads (p. 161 and 163).

The Scriblerians devote their first Chapter to their protagonist's genealogy, a common menippean device by which they satirize the human vanity of claiming distinction as a birth right, and at the same time establish their hero as an allegorical rather than a real person. Thus Martin's father is represented as a German of Münster, "by Profession an Antiquary" who claims co-sanguinity with such famed alchemists as Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus.¹⁷

Lichtenberg did not share the Scriblerian disdain for natural science. He fully appreciated the royal efforts to promote mechanical advances, especially in horology, for as an astronomer he realized that among the benefits these bestowed on humanity were considerable improvements in

¹⁷ As Münster borders on Hanover this seems a satire on Leibniz, a close associate of the House of Hanover whose possible transference to England was discussed during the time the Scriblerians were active. The interest of the Hanoverian Kings in mechanical devices and natural science which the Scriblerians ridicule individually and as a group, was largely inspired by Leibniz, who was also the inventor of a tentative calculating machine--a device which is satirized in Martinus Scriblerus as well as in Volume III of Gulliver's Travels (Chapt. v, pp. 180-83).

navigation.¹⁸ In accordance with this attitude, the alchemist father in the Nightwatches functions as an extension of Kreuzgang's personality, symbolizing his background of science, learning and traditional values, while the gypsy mother represents his passionate and impulsive side. Thus the grotesque genealogy exposes the incongruous coupling in human nature of instinct and reason.

In satire as in morality plays, proper names are traditionally used for characterization, and the Scriblerians utilise this for Martinus and his family tree, as well as for his companion Conrad Crambe who proposes: "There cannot be more in the conclusion than was in the premises; that is children can only inherit from their parents."¹⁹ In Kreuzgang's case this characterisation is, however, extended to an evil god-father, and a foster father who is a mystic artisan. By compressing his hero's background in this manner, Bonaventura can dispense with the complicated pedigrees which characterize Martinus and other menippean protagonists. As inquiries into the meaning of life are the prime concern of the menippea, the Scriblerians explain: assertion:

¹⁸ e.g. J 1155 where "Hugenus, Dr. Hooke and Harrison" are praised as creators of clocks, and for having extended the limits of science.

¹⁹ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 122.

In this Design of Martin to investigate the Diseases of the Mind, he thought nothing so necessary as an Enquiry after the Seat of the Soul: in which at first he labour'd under great uncertainties. Sometimes he was of opinion that it log'd in the Brain, sometimes in the Stomach, and sometimes in the Heart. Afterwards he thought it absurd to confine that sovereign Lady to one apartment, which made him infer that she shifted it according to the several functions of life: The Brain was her Study, the Heart her State-room, and the Stomach her Kitchen.²⁰

As if in direct response to this passage, Kreuzgang commences his contemplations on the central role of the stomach with the declaration:

As others the head or the heart, so I assume the stomach to be the seat of life. (p. 185)

Keeping in mind the raunchy wit of the Scriblerus Club and its occasional use by Lichtenberg and Bonaventura, seat may be taken here in both its literal and abstract meaning.

Both discussions occur in a twelfth chapter, in conjunction with other parallels probably a sophisticated method of allusion. Intentional parallelism is indicated by the ending of both chapters with a comparison of man to a machine. Kreuzgang refers to man as "this artful machine" in which a thousand wheels are driving and turning" (p. 187), while the Scriblerians wind up their chapter by satirizing the invention of a "Hydraulic Engine."

²⁰ Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, p. 137

The Freethinkers, to whom the Scriblerians refer several times, are represented in the Nightwatches mainly by the intellectual in the First Nightwatch, whose death directs the focus from the start towards problems concerning the existence and continuation of the soul, and provides at the same time opportunity for hard-hitting satire of the abuses of learning in theology (p. 35 ff.).

Both works also pay tribute to the Spanish contributions to tragi-comic literature by mention of Spain in various ways. Of Martinus it is said that due to "the Gravity of his Deportment and Habit [he] was generally taken for a decayed Gentleman of Spain." He and his foil Conrad Crambe evoke Don Quixote and Sancho Panza;²¹ and when "the Revenge of a cruel Spaniard" drives Martinus "almost through the whole terraqueous globe" a mixture of chivalry and futile fanaticism is indicated merely by casting a Spaniard in the role of pursuer. Bonaventura, in turn, chooses a Spanish setting for the tragedy of the opposed brothers.

Abuses of teaching are exposed by the Scriblerians when Martin's teacher frequently carries "him to the Puppet-Show of the Creation of the world,

²¹ Memoirs, e.g. pp. 124 and 169; Introduction, "The Literary Background," pp. 68 ff.

where the Child with exceeding delight gain'd a notion of the History of the Bible."²² This passage is one of many in English eighteenth-century literature which witnesses to the popularity of puppet-plays, and Bonaventura, too, draws much of his imagery from them.

Among the many devices to expose pretensions, the Scriblerians included Latinizing their hero's name. Bonaventura follows the lead by using alternately the Latin form "Olearius" for Dr. Oehlmann, his quintessential dunce.

Subtleties of this kind were often only accessible to a restricted circle even among contemporaries, and such sophisticated authorial intent is frequently missed. Not surprisingly The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus shares the fate of menippean satires to be often misunderstood.²³ The text was particularly difficult to appreciate, as the work was published so long after the events which provoked the satire.

²² Ed. Kerby-Miller, Memoirs, Chapt. iv, "Of the Suction and Nutrition of the Great Scriblerus in his Infancy, and of the first Rudiments of his Learning," p. 107, and commentary p. 215.

²³ Frye, Anatomy. After proposing to rename the menippea "anatomy," Frye writes: "It is the anatomy in particular that has baffled critics, and there is hardly any fiction writer deeply influenced by it who has not been accused of disorderly conduct," p. 313.

Among those able to savor the Scriblerian wit, erudition, and linguistic virtuosity of the Memoirs was Lichtenberg. He softened Samuel Johnson's negative judgment on the Memoirs when he published in 1782 "Pope's Leben und Schriften" in his Göttingisches Magazin.²⁴ The article shows Lichtenberg's quick reaction to publications in England which he deemed of importance, as well as his particular interest in Pope. His translation follows Johnson fairly closely, but is adapted to the interests of German readers. Some passages are shortened, explanations are interpolated, and many footnotes are provided, mainly to explain unfamiliar names. The comparative failure of Martinus Scriblerus is attributed to the range of learning which it presupposes in the reader, and Lichtenberg underlines especially the affinity to Don Quixote, and also to a French satire by a Mr. Oufle, a pseudonym which he explains as an anagram of "le fou."²⁵

²⁴ Göttingisches Magazin, 3rd year, 1st part, 1782, pp. 62 ff., repr. Vermischte Schriften (1844), Vol. V, 1844, "Nachricht von Popes Leben und Schriften aus Johnson's Prefaces biographical and critical to the works of the english poets. London, 1781," pp. 33-70.

²⁵ Lichtenberg, Vermischte Schriften (1844), Vol. V, pp. 59-60.

Lichtenberg owned an expurgated Warburton 1764 edition of Pope in 6 volumes (No. 1662) in which the episode of "The Double Mistress" was duly omitted, but he studied his favorite English authors also in their native country, where he read their works and visited places connected with their memories. During his second visit he paraphrased a couplet from Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," and excerpted lines from the Essay on Criticism which playfully use the word "nothing" in the plural:

such mighty nothings in so strange a stile [sic]
 amaze th'unlearned and make the learned smile.
 (326-27)²⁶

Particular interest in the nature of "nothing" is shown by substitution of Pope's epithet "laboured" with the oxymoronic and more emphatic "mighty."

In "The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" Pope speaks of his detractors in terms to which Lichtenberg and Bonaventura supplied several variants:

There are, who to my Person pay their court,
 I cough like Horace, and tho' lean, am short,
Ammon's great Son one shoulder had too high,
 Such Ovid's nose, and "Sir! you have an Eye---"
 Go on, obliging Creatures, make me see
 All that disgrac'd my Betters, met in bed:
 Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
 "Just so immortal Maro held his head:"
 And when I die, be sure you let me know
 Great Homer dy'd three thousand years ago.
 11. 115-124.

²⁶ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, pp. 37 and 159; pp. 231, 606 and 619, Vol. II, p. 170.

Pope uses here irrelevant idiosyncracies of the famous to expose the hollowness of flattery, and of those who are concerned with nothing but trivia. Lichtenberg adapted the idea to deride the vanity of dunces, simultaneously deploring the fact that genius is so readily admired, and so seldom studied or understood. This paradox occupied his thoughts for many years. In October 1776 he wrote:

He united in himself the attributes of the greatest men. He always dropped his head like Alexander, and fumbled in his hair like Caesar. He could drink coffee like Leibniz, and when he settled down in an easy chair he forgot food and drink like Newton, and had to be woken up like him. His wig he wore like Dr. Johnson and one of his fly-buttons was always open just like with Cervantes (F 492).

In early summer 1798 he repeated the observation, this time more concisely and pointedly:

Like Alexander he held his head to one side, like Cervantes he always had his fly open, and like Montaigne he was unable to count, neither with numbers nor with money (L 471).

In the Twelfth Nightwatch, Bonaventura uses the same topos, but superimposes a satire on Lavater's brand of physiognomy. Kreuzgang meets a poet who is pursuing immortality, and eagerly reveals his stratagems:

I have tried in every way to advance myself, but always in vain; until I finally found I have Kant's nose, Goethe's eyes, Lessing's forehead, Schiller's mouth and the backside of several famous men; I called attention to this and arrived; indeed, people began to admire me. Next I pushed things further, I wrote to leading

spirits for old cast-off clothes, and fortune benevolently granted that I now stride about in shoes in which Kant once walked with his own feet, during the day set Goethe's hat on Lessing's wig, and in the evening wear Schiller's night cap; indeed, I went still further, I learned to cry like Kotzebue and sneeze like Tieck, and you won't believe what an impression I can often thereby bring about; a creature lives after all in its body and would rather have to deal with this than with the mind; it is no shadowboxing when I tell you that someone, before whom I once wandered in as Goethe, with hat set backwards and hands hidden in the folds of my coat, gave me the assurance that I amused him more than Goethe's writings.-- People have been asking me since then to the most elegant tables and I get on quite well there. (p. 179 and 181)

Identification with irrelevant characteristics of the famous exposes this modern poet as a sham. The satire, however, hits also the public which is so easily pleased with the mere trappings of fame.

Of special interest for Lichtenberg and the Nightwatches is also Pope's "Epistle to Mr. Jervas,"²⁷ for it is dedicated to the painter Charles Jervas (1675-1739) and deals "With Dryden's Translation of Fresnoy's Art of Painting," which had appeared in 1695. Pope celebrates in this address to his friend the "Sister-arts" of painting and poetry which ". . . each from each contract new strength and light," (line 16) and reflect "images . . . from art to art" (line 20). Raphael and Virgil are the

²⁷ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, Sel. and intr. Aubrey Williams (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), pp. 101-103.

standard setters, and Corregio is praised for his soft line. These two painters also figure in the Nightwatches as measures of perfection.

Lichtenberg showed in his Commentaries to Hogarth how much he sympathized with the view that all achievements of the intellect and imagination should be integrated. Bonaventura continues in this tradition, his coupling of art and poetry, though, has been interpreted as a romantic trait. While for the romantics art was an aesthetic experience, and poetry and music were regarded as gates into a realm of beauty and harmony that transcends reality, the enlightenment viewed the arts as an opportunity to expand the human capacity to come to terms with reality, and thus improve the tasks of life. As literary criticism was rated an influential aid to enlarged perception and heightened sensitivity, Pope, Lichtenberg and Bonaventura resorted to it extensively. All three practice literary criticism in the satiric form at which the Scriblerians excelled.

Perhaps the best known example of this rarely used satiric sub-genre is Peri Bathous or the Art of Sinking in Poetry, which was first published in March 1728. It is usually credited to Pope, who is thought to have written it with some help from Swift and Dr.

Arbuthnot, for it appeared under the name of Martinus Scriblerus and thereby acknowledges strong influence from the Scriblerus Club. It works on what Ronald Paulson calls "the Swiftian solution" of letting the antihero condemn himself,²⁸ for Martin praises and quotes passages from the poets whom Pope has attacked in the Dunciad. Their more or less glaring weaknesses are deftly demonstrated by lavish praise from the narrow-minded and insensitive Martin, but also by the strict generic rules he discusses, which frame his knowledgeable, but uncomprehending explications.

Satire has to be attentive to genre. As it attacks transgressions and deviations, it needs an accepted canon as a model of the desirable, and examples which it can recommend. In Peri Bathous the title already shows that the treatise takes its lead from the essay of the first century A.D. literary critic Longinus, On the Sublime, (Peri Hupsous), which later exerted strong influence on romantic poets. Longinus is occupied with "the consideration of the means whereby we may succeed in raising our own capacities to a certain pitch of elevation."²⁹

²⁸ Paulson, Satire and the Novel, p. 103.

²⁹ Ed. Adams, Critical Theory since Plato. Longinus, "On the Sublime," pp. 77-102, p. 77.

Pope achieves his satire by manipulating the meanings of "sublime" and "profound." He has Martinus to understand these concepts in their common meaning of high and low, and while his satiric persona guilelessly talks of altitude, Pope is really stigmatizing the prevalence of uninformed and perverted public judgment.

"We shall find those who have a taste for the Sublime to be very few, but the Profound strikes universally, and is adapted to every Capacity," Martinus declares, and he goes on to argue that few are interested in risking the trouble and fatigue to climb high peaks: hence the majority will always be content to remain comfortably close to the ground. Why then should all honors and dignities "be bestowe'd upon the exceeding few meager inhabitants of the Top of the Mountain"?³⁰

By equating mountain with Parnassus, Pope can sustain his metaphor, and condemn mental inertia by letting Scriblerus praise the common-sense of staying out of trouble's way and remaining comfortably at the bottom. Thus he proves "that the Bathos, or Profound, is the natural Taste of Man, and in particular, of the present Age" (Chapt. II). By this double talk Pope generalizes his satire to fit any

³⁰ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, p. 391.

target that comes to mind. But he also provides a sophisticated guide for rhetoric, as the the learned Martinus displays all the most important figures of speech, linguistic embellishments and literary rules in a sustained parody of their true meaning. In this essay Pope exercises the whole range of traditional craftsmanship with which the seemingly artless barbs of satire are forged, and which induced Alvin P. Kernan to say that the satirist "is always an extremely clever poetic strategist and manipulator of language who possesses an incredibly copious and colorful vocabulary and an almost limitless arsenal of rhetorical devices."³¹ Peri Bathous epitomizes Pope's first principle of criticism, as emphasized by Ian Jack, to consider the generic nature of a piece, and the intent of its author.³² In Peri Bathous Pope delights in parading his thorough mastery of the rhetorical apparatus, which is the essential base for successful satire, as persuasion is the satirist's task. Several particular touches in their works suggest that Lichtenberg and Kreuzgang studied Pope's

³¹ Alvin P. Kernan, "The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance." In Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism. Ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 251.

³² Ian Jack, Augustan Satire. Intention and Idiom in English Poetry, 1660-1700 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 77.

amusing and instructive work, and profited from the lesson.

Lichtenberg repeatedly attacked Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1826), known to him since Voss was a student and member of the enthusiastic poetic circle known as the Göttinger Hain. Lichtenberg writes against the adoration of Klopstock, and the worship of genius among these young men, for he shared the antipathy of the English eighteenth-century satirists against all forms of unsubstantiated enthusiasm. He voiced his disapproval in many different ways, but he took up his pen when Voss, who translated the Odyssey and Iliad (1781-93), became a philological adversary of Christian Gottlob Heyne (1720-1812), professor in Göttingen. Lichtenberg contributed several essays to the controversy, casting Voss as a dunce in the Scriblerian sense, and attacking him with the satirical apparatus which the Scriblerus Club had perfected. He acknowledges this connection with the exasperated exclamation: "Oh! If only someone would write a Dunciad now!"³³

German readers had, however, never been exposed to the constant satiric crossfire which was a by-product of English party strife, and though

³³ Promies, Vol. III, "Über die Pronunciation der Schöpse," pp. 296-308, p. 299.

Lichtenberg's darts are somewhat less virulent than those which Pope or Swift directed against their targets, the his essay was widely criticized as too sharp and offensive.³⁴

Klopstock had already irritated Lichtenberg considerably by proposing a revised German orthography,³⁵ and now Voss attempted to revise Greek spelling. Thus the actual occasion of Lichtenberg's attack was comparatively trivial, especially as there was no immediate danger that any of these proposals would be adopted. But the blow was aimed at the forces of dullness, the abuses of learning in a wider sense, and these were the targets against which the Scriblerians had fought before him. In an essay that appeared in the Deutsches Museum in 1782, Lichtenberg introduces Voss thinly disguised as the principal of a school. A young pupil questions him eagerly on the most advantageous application of his new rules, and this artless innocence exposes their futility and

³⁴ E.g. Ich war wohl klug, dass ich dich fand. Heinrich Christian Boies Briefwechsel mit Luise Meyer 1777-85. Ed. Ilse Schreiber (München: Biederstein, 1963) p. 193, letter of December 16th, 1782. In view of Lichtenberg's satiric stance Luise Meyer wrote on January 23, 1785: "There can be nothing more vain on earth as such a Göttinger scholar who does not acknowledge any other merit and looks down on everybody else as poor wretches."

³⁵ Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, No. 561, letter to Carl Friedrich Hindenburg, 1778, where Lichtenberg mimics and ridicules Klopstock's proposals.

illogical contradictions. Voss paid his homage to the venerated Homer by envisaging him in a gown woven of the aurora borealis, and Lichtenberg lampoons this metaphoric excess on two different occasions.³⁶

Quite similar examples of poetic fancy are stigmatized by Pope, who has Martinus propose that "when a true Genius looks upon the Sky, he immediately catches the Idea of a Piece of Blue Lutestring, or a Child's Mantle" and recommends "this happy and antinatural way of thinking to such a degree, as to be able, on the appearance of any Object, to furnish his Imagination with Ideas infinitely below it."³⁷

In Chapter X Martinus Scriblerus deals with "Tropes and Figures: and first of the variegating, confounding, and reversing Figures," in Chapter XI with those that magnify and diminish. Much of his advice is followed in the "Dithyramb on Spring" of the Nightwatches. This short piece is written in the "Florid Stile," which according to Martinus is most "proper to the Bathos, as Flowers which are the Lowest of Vegetables are most Gaudy, and do many times grow in great Plenty at the bottom of Ponds and

³⁶ Mautner, Schriften und Briefe. Vol. II, 404 and 420.

³⁷ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, p. 396.

Ditches." In support Pope has Martinus quote from Aphra Behn: "The Groves appear all drest in Wreaths of Flowers/And from their leaves drop aromatic Showers . . ."³⁸

The "Dithyramb" follows Martinus' advice, amplifying the message that spring has arrived in a bewildering medley of tropes which pair the trivial with the sublime. While Spring is apostrophized, and winter introduced as her "gloomy brother," the parallelism is immediately disturbed by a new conceit: "Blushing in morning's glow, the young earth steps forth as a budding virgin" (p. 189). The illogical metaphor--for on what could the earth step, if not on itself--recalls Pope's quotation from Theobald: "None but Himself can be his Parallel," which contains a similar physical impossibility.³⁹ The apparition unnerves winter to such a degree that he flees "and the shields and armour in which he stood encased rattle crashing pell-mell and shatter." The inconsistent figures of speech conform to Martinus' rules on metaphoric magnification, amplification and coupling of opposites. The "florid style" which heaps and mixes metaphors is also of the

³⁸ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, pp. 410-20; p. 423.

³⁹ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, p. 412; p. 402, from Theobald's "Double Falsehood."

type Peri Bathous recommends as particularly poetical: "The trees twine their branches in fragrant garlands and proffer them to the sky; the eagle ascends prayerfully into the sun's splendour as to God, and the lark swirls after him, exulting over the adorned earth. Every fragrant calix becomes a bridal chamber" (p. 189). When Bonaventura parodies poetic effusion, few clichés are missing.

In a passage especially close to the techniques of the "Dithyramb," Martinus commends an author who has "amplified a Passage in the 104th Psalm: "He looks on the Earth, and it trembles. He touches the Hills, and they smoke."

The Hills forget they're fix'd, and in their
Fright
 Cast off their Weight, and ease themselves for
flight;
The Woods, with Terror wing'd, out-fly the Wind,
And leave the heavy, panting Hills behind.

As Martinus points out officiously; "You here see the Hills not only trembling, but shaking off their Woods from their Backs, to run faster: After this you are presented with a Foot Race of Mountains and Woods, where the Woods distance the Mountains, that like corpulent pursy Fellows, come puffing and panting a vast way behind them."⁴⁰ The sprightly steps of the earth in the "Dithyramb" recall this

⁴⁰ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, p. 406.

passage, and the Insane World Creator alludes to the same verse from the 104th Psalm when he looks on the world-ball in his hand and speaks of the earthquakes which are occasioned there by his casual contact (p. 153). In the Nightwatches the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755 is recalled in this seemingly playful aside.

Not much that is celebrated in poetry escapes Pope's attention, from the sublime manifestations of God to "The Inanity, or Nothingness" with which some moderns easily fill "every second Verse."⁴¹ Here Pope equates "nothing" with the irrelevant, insignificant and trivial, which is the dominant meaning of the word in eighteenth-century usage.

Among other parallels is a passage in Chapter IX where Pope pays attention to "Imitation, and the manner of Imitating." As an illustration, he cites a verse in which Virgil describes the Etna together with a modern evocation of the same location, which Martinus infinitely prefers. The eruption is likened to vomit, and Martinus declares in admiration: "Horace, in search of the Sublime, struck his Head against the Stars; but Empedocles, to fathom the Profound, threw himself into Aetna: And who but would

⁴¹ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, pp. 418-19.

imagine our excellent Modern had also been there, from this Description?"⁴²

James Sutherland sees the satirist as focussing on one particular issue while ignoring the complexity of life, as drawing his strength from drastic simplifications.⁴³ For the writer of menippeas the puzzles and unresolvable paradoxes of life are, however, the organizing principle of his genre. Bonaventura masters all these intricacies, and the brevity of his expression is the result of comprehensive knowledge, persistent thought and a thorough familiarity with the art of rhetoric.

It was the dearth of these qualities which the Scriblerus Club deplored. Pope's Dunciad, first published anonymously in 1728, was a direct outcome of their reflections on general intellectual lethargy and its consequences. A revised and enlarged copy was printed in 1743. The Dunciad has a universal theme: the impediment and defeat of common sense by irrational forces, and the adverse impact of mental inactivity on human progress--fears which are allegorized in "the restoration of the reign of Chaos and Night, by the ministry of Dulness their

⁴² Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, p. 408.

⁴³ James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), p. 18.

daughter."⁴⁴ The theme, though universal, is elaborated with so much topicality and so many references and allusions which presuppose thorough familiarity with Pope's literary contemporaries, that the work did not achieve popularity in Germany. There it was regarded rather as a precept of how to finish off adversaries with invective, and the imitations which resulted were mainly feeble and "led to no valuable creative work." Price sees Pope in Germany mainly as an intermediary of the views of Shaftesbury, and as the inspiration behind a vogue for clarity and simplicity in expression that was of short duration.⁴⁵

Lichtenberg, however, understood the objectives of the Dunciad, for he used it as a metonym for the narrow-minded shallowness and professional incompetence which is epitomized by Martinus Scriblerus and his associates. For example, he says of Vossens "ill-advised and childish innovations" that they belong to the theater or a Dunciad.⁴⁶ He tried to popularize Pope by various means and to counteract the misunderstanding and even ridicule

⁴⁴ Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, pp. 304-305.

⁴⁵ Price, English Literature in Germany, pp. 40-41; pp. 71-72.

⁴⁶ Promies, Vol. III, p. 299.

with which the English poet had met. It was Pope's "Life" that he chose as the first of Johnson's Lives of the English Poets for his Göttingische Magazin.⁴⁷ The article ends with the unfulfilled promise to discuss Pope's literary merit in the next number.

Lichtenberg's empathy with Pope, whose physical disabilities he shared, may have induced him to substitute his own year of birth, 1742, for the year in which Pope died. The Royal Society registered him as being born in 1744,⁴⁸ and he alluded to his idiosyncratic relocation of the date of his birth to 1744 in F 1217. The cryptic sentence contains a reference to metempsychosis, and mentions his curious tendency to think of himself "probably" as two years younger than his real age.⁴⁹ Strangely, both men died in their fifty-sixth year.

The personal world which Lichtenberg kept hidden behind his often tantalizingly short allusions still remains private. Of his public objectives, however, a close second to his didactic purpose to advance and

⁴⁷ Lichtenberg, Vermischte Schriften (1844), Vol. V, pp. 34-35, see n. with a poem from Voss or his friends, in which Pope's misshapen figure is ridiculed; pp. 70 ff.

⁴⁸ Personal information from the Librarian of the Royal Society, Mr. N. H. Robinson.

⁴⁹ See also Wolfgang Promies, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1964), p. 7.

promote knowledge and understanding was his fight against incompetence. In this he shared targets, goals and satirical weapons with the members of the Scriblerus Club, and took especially the Dunciad as his model. Correlations to this poem can also be traced in the Nightwatches where they culminate in the Ninth Nightwatch.

CHAPTER VII

THE NINTH NIGHTWATCH: A DIGRESSION ON MADNESS, A DUNCIAD, AND A SATIRE ON THE SOCRATIC DIALOGUE.

After guiding reader expectation towards the Tragedy: Man, and following directly the "Exit Prologus" (p. 143), the Ninth Nightwatch leads into a surprisingly different world, and thus presents challenges to interpretation, the more so as the Clown's introduction ends by raising high hopes for a significant sequel:

I have now more or less heralded myself and in any case can now allow the tragedy itself to appear with its three unities: of time--to which I shall hold strictly, so that man does not perhaps stray into eternity; of place--which is going to remain fixed in space; and of action--which I shall limit as much as possible, so that man, that Oedipus, progress only as far as blindness, but not in a second plot to transfiguration. (pp. 141 and 143)

The emphasis on literary rules in this passage recalls that Oedipus, the tragedy by Sophocles, served French classicists and their German followers as a paradigm for plot construction and provided the model of the three Aristotelian unities: time, place

and action.¹ While showing his familiarity with the neoclassical rules, Bonaventura announces firmly that he will apply them in his own way, and take what freedoms he finds appropriate. This authorial statement is styled as a variation of the frequent stage metaphors, and presents new aspects of Kreuzgang's constant queries concerning the interaction of life and death. By equating theatrical time with human time, he implies belief in eternity, and gives voice to his vision of life as part of a larger and ongoing process.

In speaking of "Man, that Oedipus," he uses the name metonymically as synecdoche for human fate in general. Oedipus, it will be remembered, was determined to find the truth. Distinguished by exceptional sagacity and wisdom, he was yet neither able to understand and handle his own fate, nor to escape the disaster ordained for his house. When he finally recognized his true situation, he tore out his own eyes in despair, preferring blindness to clear sight. Blindness inflicted by the inability or disinclination to bear reality is repeated several

¹ E.g. Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg, Vermischte Schriften, 3 vols. (1815-1816; rpt. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1973), Vol. III, p. 258.

times throughout the Nightwatches; Homer and Ugolino, too, suffered this fate.

What Bonaventura has to say about the three unities implies denial of a happy solution; but he indicates that a second plot will lead to transfiguration. The brief glimpse of better things to come is, however, immediately counterbalanced by the Clown's sombre talk of masks:

the more masks there are on top of the other, all the more fun it is to pull them off one after the other down to the penultimate satirical one, the Hippocratic and the last fixed one, which no longer laughs and cries--the skull, hairless fore and aft, with which the tragicomedian departs in the end (p. 143).

The appearance of the Clown as the speaker of the Prologue has already served as warning that the Tragedy: Man cannot be a conventional drama in the grand manner. His parting words stress again the serio-comic, mock heroic play that might be expected to follow. But the sequel is the Ninth Nightwatch with an account of the madhouse, and the last time Kreuzgang fulfilled his duties as "vice or sub-overseer" there.

The unforeseen change in pace and content unsettles, and Jeffrey Sammons feels therefore that "it is worth saying that IX is unquestionably the weakest chapter in the book. The satirical possibilities of describing a set of twenty inmates

of a madhouse are limitless, but Bonaventura's ordinarily rich imagination is simply not up to it." Sammons also states that "if the continued accusations of the critics that Bonaventura is careless and lacks the will to artistic perfection have any validity," this chapter furnishes the proof.²

"Abrupt transitions and shifts, ups and downs, rises and falls, unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, mesalliances of all sorts" are, however, the mark of the *menippeia*, a genre which according to Bakhtin "is full of sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations."³ This literary tradition is followed by Bonaventura, as shown, for example, by Kreuzgang's oxymoronic questions at the end of the chapter: "perhaps error might even be truth, folly wisdom, death life-- exactly the opposite of how one at present takes it!" (p. 157).

The beginning of the Ninth Nightwatch is also oxymoronic. Kreuzgang confides that "among the many thorns of my life I did find at least one rose in full flower . . . in the madhouse." A variation of the Clown's digression on masks follows, this time

² Jeffrey L. Sammons, p. 46.

³ Bakhtin, Problemss, p. 118.

using an onion-simile to explain that layer upon layer has to be stripped off before the essence can be recognized:

Humanity is organized exactly in the manner of an onion; layer by layer, one is inserted into the other down to the smallest one, in which man himself fits quite tinily (p. 143).

Progressing from a masked head to humanity, the thought is repeated a third time and now projected into universal and transcendental proportions, as Kreuzgang continues: "So humanity builds into the great temple of heaven . . . smaller temples . . . and into these still smaller chapels and tabernacles." The great world-religion--a concept taken from Spinoza--is parceled into ever narrower divisions; we get "religions for Jews, Heathens, Turks and Christians; indeed, the latter are not even satisfied with this, but are boxing themselves in yet anew." Likewise is the world as such organized, this "general insane asylum out of whose windows so many heads are looking, some partially, some totally crazed; even in here there are yet smaller madhouses built in for particular fools" (p. 143). These variations on the same theme, using metaphors from masks to madhouses, assure thematical continuation from the Eighth to the Ninth Nightwatch, and highlight the allegorical and universal relevance of the digression on madness which follows.

In her investigation of the structure of the Nightwatches, Dorothea Sölle-Nipperdey acknowledges the madhouse scenes as a change of perspective, and the preoccupation with masks reveals to her the Einschachtelung, boxes within boxes, as an organizing principle.⁴ Bonaventura conforms to this reading by using the word schachteln, to fit as into boxes. In A Tale of a Tub, Swift proposes:

not to digress farther in the midst of a digression, as I have known some authors enclose digressions in one another like a nest of boxes.⁵

As Germans were not as familiar as the English with these oriental artifacts, Bonaventura translates the simile into the plant world. His use of the common and unromantic onion⁶ for that purpose has baffled some readers. The onion was, however, as Lichtenberg records in F 416, already sacred to the Egyptians, and as early as 1769 he himself had seen in it an emblem of man, his nerves resembling the

⁴ Dorothea Sölle-Nipperdey, Untersuchungen zur Struktur der Nachtwachen von Bonaventura (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959). Palaestra. Untersuchungen der deutschen und Englischen Philologie und Literaturgeschichte, Vol. 230.

⁵ Gulliver's Travels et al., "A Digression in the Modern Kind," (Tale of a Tub, Section V), p. 346.

⁶ The German word Zwiebel is ambiguous, and can mean onion or plant-bulb. Adelung notes also the verb zwiebeln with its double meaning: a) to tease, vex and bring to tears, (still in use) and b) to cleanse and restore pictures by rubbing them with onion juice.

roots, and the body in both cases serving for their support. Visible is only the pot "in which Man (the nerves) has been planted" B 35. The pot corresponds to the masks and layers of artificiality which hide true nature from view.

Kreuzgang's sustained metaphor of boxes within boxes finishes with a vision of the world in which the partitions between sanity and insanity become blurred and life in the madhouse is shown to be but a subdivision of "the general insane asylum" without. This view is already taken by Swift's mouthpiece, the Hack, in the Tale of a Tub. In the "Digression on Madness" he voices the opinion that there is no very significant difference between life within and without Bedlam, and for this reason he proposes "a bill to appoint commissioners to inspect into Bedlam and the parts adjacent" to recruit "admirable instruments for the several offices in a state,*****, civil, and military." The dots stand for "ecclesiastical".⁷

Just after this proposal, and before a description of the lunatics who would be so perfectly fitted for high public office, the Hack assures the reader that his solicitude is occasioned by "that high esteem I have ever borne that honourable

⁷ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 374.

society, whereof I had sometime the happiness to be an unworthy member." Poised between a discussion of the ruling classes and the inmates of Bedlam, the remark could refer to either and thus confuses the demarcation lines between the two groups even further, especially as he continues:

Is any student tearing his straw in piece-meal, swearing and blaspheming, biting his grate, foaming at the mouth and emptying his pisspot in the spectator's faces? Let the right worshipful, the commissioners of inspection, give him a regiment of dragoons, and send him into Flanders among the rest.⁸

Swift starts conventionally enough with a description of expected Bedlam behaviour, which people at his time flocked to watch for diversion. Then with one of his sudden changes of strategy, he draws the connection with a type of behaviour to which society takes no exception, especially if it occurs far away from home. Affinities between the sane and the insane then are demonstrated in politics, trade, law, medicine and religion--in fact, all the important public services, the traditional targets of satire. Whether the Hack is raving mad himself, or on the contrary sees the human condition more clearly than others, is obscured by his indistinct position within the Tale. Clarification of this question is left to the reader.

⁸ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 375.

Swift's satire mirrors the eighteenth-century fascination with madness, of which Hogarth left a moving visual record in his Plate VIII of the Rake's Progress. Lichtenberg calls the scene "a sepultura inter vivos, more properly a burial among the civic dead," and he says of the dying Rake, in words which echo Swift and foreshadow Bonaventura: "In the Microcosmos where he lives now, affairs are ordered very much as they are in the extended Macro-Bedlam, the world itself; not all the madmen are chained, and even the chains have their degrees."⁹

Lichtenberg visited Bedlam himself during his second stay in London, and the very few remarks he made about this event testify to the lasting impression it made on him. In his London diary he records the haunting memory of a woman staring out of a garret window, as he left the distressing scene.¹⁰ Such heads looking out of the windows of the insane asylum have become a metaphor for the vacuity of life in the Nightwatches (p. 143).

Lichtenberg's familiarity with English affairs is shown in the commentary to Plate VIII by a passing

⁹ Ed. Herdan and Herdan, Lichtenberg's Commentaries. "A Rake's Progress," Pl. VIII, p. 264, pp. 263-64.

¹⁰ Ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England. Vol. I, p. 195.

reference just by surname to a once popular prophet, a Richard Brothers (1757-1824) from Newfoundland, who announced the millenium and was confined to Bedlam for his pains--a fate repeated in Kreuzgang's experience.

Hogarth opens the view into the crowded corridor of the madhouse. Three cells, numbered as in the Nightwatches, are visible in the background; one of them is closed and Lichtenberg speculates that this may be arranged so that everybody can people it with those desperate cases that exhibit the symptoms closest to their own nightmares. For Lichtenberg there is no doubt that the invisible inhabitant suffers from the madness of love. In the Ninth Nightwatch this particular affliction is likewise shielded from public view: "No. 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 are variations on the same street ballad, love," declares Kreuzgang, and proceeds without further explanations to the next cell where No. 17 is absorbed with his own nose and serves as a paradigm for "entire faculties" (p. 155).

Repetition, one of Bonaventura's highlighting devices, is used to indicate the intensity of suffering which love is causing. Silence on the subject is another affirmation of the havoc wrought by love, if the three times repeated reference to the

veil cast over the deepest grief by the Athenian painter Timanthes is taken as indication. Further evidence of the importance of love as a cause of human madness is the introduction of the chapter as well as its conclusion. Both speak of love with the metaphor "Maytime in the madhouse" (p. 143 and 157), but significantly, love itself does not belong in this chapter and merits "another nightpiece." While madness through love reveals the misuse of the emotional sensibilities, the delusions arising from philosophy, science and poetry imply the aberrations of the intellect. As a German, Bonaventura had to couch his satire in private terms, as in the case of No. 5, who "held talks which were too reasonable and understandable, therefore they have sent him here."

The case is a variation of Kreuzgang's own experience. Seen in conjunction with the opinion that "in a state full of nothing but thieves, honesty alone would have to be punished with the rope" (p. 129) the short and seemingly mild comment constitutes, in fact, a devastating attack on public affairs. No. 6, who "became deranged through the derangement of taking seriously a potentate's joke" (p. 147), epitomizes the misery caused by the hypocrisy, lies and deceit in public life against

which men like the Scriblerians, Fielding, Johnson and Sterne fought so relentlessly.

The descriptions of the diseased minds are often so short and the allusions so complex that it is difficult to see always clearly what Bonaventura really had in mind. No. 7 has been "venturing too high in poetry" and No. 8 "pushed the emotion in his comedies too extravagantly in his days of reason." Consequently, they both have been taken for poets.¹¹ As one of them "now imagines he burns as flame, just as the latter by contrast flows off as water," they represent, however, a number of controversies, including the opposing systems and theories which sprung up during the eighteenth century regarding the origin of the earth, and whether water or fire was the first principle. The exact details matter little. As Kreuzgang sides with Lichtenberg and regards all systems as faulty, the passions they rouse and the strife they cause appears inevitably sterile and unproductive in his view. Swift's examination of "the great introducers of new schemes in philosophy . . . in the academy of modern Bedlam," is written in the same spirit.¹²

¹¹ Sölle-Nipperdey, p. 65.

¹² Gulliver's Travels et al., pp. 368-69.

Altogether the Ninth Nightwatch uses the same surrealist methods which Swift handles so masterfully in his Tale of a Tub, most of all in his "Digression on Madness." Disturbing thoughts are presented in an atmosphere confused by doubts, and then illuminated by satiric glimpses of tragedy and comedy, and by flashes of truth which constantly highlight new aspects and thereby add as much to confusion as to understanding. All this is part of the menippean plan. As the genre maximises reader involvement, it leaves loose ends everywhere, especially in place of a conclusion.

When Swift declares of "unmasking" that it "has never been allowed fair usage, either in the world or the play-house," he uses menippean stage imagery in his search for the truth. The illusory world of the theatre is, however, left far behind, when he talks about reality behind pretenses:

Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the carcass of a beau to be stripped in my presence, when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected faults under one suit of clothes.¹³

Nowhere does Bonaventura go as far as that, but he follows Swift in other details. One of the madmen described by the Hack is "gravely taking the

¹³ Gulliver's Travels et al., pp. 372-73.

dimension of his kennel, a person of foresight and insight, though kept quite in the dark; for why, like Moses, ecce cornuta erat ejus facies."¹⁴ To this corresponds in the Nightwatches No. 10, he who "barks as a dog and formerly served at court" (p. 155).

Kreuzgang speaks at the end of his digression on madness of "a highest idealisation of the Centaur nature in man, when the well-satisfied animal below allows the higher rider to strut about audaciously" (p. 157). In the title plate to Young's satire, "The Centaur not Fabulous," to which Fleig has related the passage, this mythological creature tramples the two tablets with the Ten Commandments under foot. To retain this combination Kreuzgang continues:

But on closer examination I found everything vain and recognized in all this lauded wisdom nothing other than the cover which is hung over the Mosaic countenance of life so that it not see God. (p. 157)¹⁵

In the frontispiece, the Mosaic tablets are metonymic for the morals and decency which mankind arrogantly disregards. Swift's interest in the biblical reference is occasioned by the double meaning of cornutus, which can be translated as horned or shining, and fits his design well in either

¹⁴ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 375.

¹⁵ "I found everything vain," is the recurrent theme of Eccl.

sense. While Swift quotes Ex. XXXIV, 35, where Moses' face glows from the encounter with God, Kreuzgang's allusion is less clear. Fleig notes that Bonaventura's metaphor is closer to Ex. XXXIII, 19-23 than to Ex. XXXIV, 35, but that the quotation is not used correctly, and seems to have been misunderstood.¹⁶ Indeed, in Exodus Moses veils himself when he is speaking with the children of Israel, and "when he went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off," (Ex. XXXIV, 33-34).

The image of the veiled Moses is only implied in Ex. XXXIII, 20, where God says to him: "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." This verdict seems incompatible with Ex. XXXIII, 34, but it confirms Bonaventura's metonymic use of blindness for the inability of man to see his true position in relation to the universe, and it parallels the allegorical use of Moses' veil by St. Paul, and Jacob Böhme in his Mysterium Magnum.¹⁷

¹⁶ Fleig, Literarischer Vampirismus, p. 234-35. Fleig adds, that when Klingemann uses Ex. XXXIII, 19-23 metaphorically in 1828 he does so correctly.

¹⁷ 2. Cor. III, 13-18, where the veil of Moses represents the blindness and ignorance of the unconverted, but: "nevertheless, when it all shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." Theosophia Revelata, Vol. XVII, Mysterium Magnum, cum Epitome. Erklärung über das erste Buch Mosis, nebst dem kurzen Extract. Chapt. XI, "Von der Heimlichkeit der Schöpfung," summary p. 66.

Where Swift's penetrating wit reveals through verbal ambiguities that the ludicrous and the sublime can cohabit in the same expression, Bonaventura superimposes references and allusions from diverse sources to fuse a wealth of meaning into short phrases and even single words. The structure and the general themes of his text are built upon the same principles. Thus, besides parallels to Swift's Tale, others to Pope's Dunciad run also strongly through the Ninth Nightwatch. Book the Fourth of the Dunciad starts by setting a mood akin to that of the

Nightwatches:

Yet, yet a moment, one dim ray of light
Indulge, dread Chaos, and eternal Night!
Of darkness visible so much be lent,
As half to show, half veil, the deep intent.

As in the Dunciad, Chaos and Night are often evoked in the Nightwatches. According to ancient belief, reiterated in Paradise Lost, they rule that part of the universe in which God has not yet established his order. The oxymoron "darkness visible" is used by Milton as a description of hell, and most of Pope's readers would recognize the quote without prompting. Before Pope draws his Fourth Book to an end, he shows

Skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casusistry heaped o'er her head!
(641-42)

In the Ninth Nightwatch, Kreuzgang's "own little fool's chamber," the final room that is shown, and the only one into which the reader is admitted, corresponds to this cavern-retreat. In the terms of the Dunciad, Kreuzgang represents the opposition to the Daughter of Chaos, Queen Dulness, who establishes her rule at the end of Pope's satire:

Lo! thy dread empire, CHAOS! is restored;
 Light dies before thy uncreating word:
 Thy hand, great anarchy! lets the curtain fall;
 And universal darkness buries all (653-66).

With Kreuzgang cast in the role of Truth, epitomizing the triumphant dunces falls to his opponent Dr. Oehlmann. It is clear that he is an important part of Bonaventura's design, for he is singled out by bearing the only proper name in the text apart from the nightwatchman himself. Moreover the importance of this name is stressed by its alternative appearance in a common and a Latinized form.

Latinizing their names was an accepted practice among German scholars, whose language of discourse was Latin until well into the seventeenth century. The works of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) were still written in that tongue, and even Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), a progressive philosopher at the university of Halle, and the first German

university professor to lecture in the vernacular, used the Latin version of his name.

In eighteenth-century satiric usage, however, latinizing a name is emblematic for self-aggrandizement and vainglorious obfuscation, as demonstrated by Martinus Scriblerus, the satiric mouthpiece of the Scriblerus Club, who represents the misuses of intelligence and knowledge. Oehlmann/Olearius is similarly characterized by his name. His dedication to self-interest conforms to the command of Pope's *Dulness* to her children:

My sons! be proud, be selfish, and be dull.
Guard my prerogative, assert my throne (582-83).

In the microcosm of the asylum he also corresponds to the "Tyrant supreme" who

shall three estates command,
And MAKE ONE MIGHTY DUNCIAD OF THE LAND!
(603-04)

He has learned "but to trifle," (457) and personifies the main characteristic of those who abuse the gift of intellect because they "See all in self, and but for self be born" (480). He is also an empty head that consoles "with empty sound," (542) hears "the voice of fame" (543) rather than that of duty, and tranquilizes himself and others with "the balm of Dulness" (543).

The names Oehlmann and Olearius are both still in use, though not common. Various parallels have

been suggested; Gillespie points to Goethe's lawyer Olerairus in Götz von Berlichingen,¹⁸ "Sanitätsrat Öhlhafen" in Jean Paul's Siebenkäs has also been proposed as a possible connection. As Öhlhafen--oil pot--refers to the unctions and potions freely dispensed by quacks, the combination with the distinguished title "Sanitätsrat" is therefore designed to cast doubts on the doctor's competence.

Lichtenberg appreciated Jean Paul's techniques. He enjoyed and eagerly read his works, including Siebenkäs, as far as they appeared during his life time (e.g. L 87). The name, therefore, could well be inspired by Jean Paul. The antagonist who would fit the personality of Dr. Öhlmann in Lichtenberg's perspective is the Swiss Dr. Johann Georg von Zimmermann (1728-95), a court physician in Hanover. He had been knighted by the emperor, and had ingratiated himself at many courts, including that of Frederick the Great, whom he attended at his death.

He was among the very few--Johann Heinrich Voss was another--whom Lichtenberg ever attacked by name.¹⁹ The controversy started when Zimmermann convinced Lavater that his Physiognomische Fragmente

¹⁸ Gillespie, p. 251.

¹⁹ Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes, "Bildnis seines Geistes," p. 35.

should be printed. While Lichtenberg became in time convinced that Lavater really meant well and acted in good faith, he always saw Zimmermann as one who neither cared for truth nor science, and would use any opportunity to further his own advantage.

Lichtenberg's initial objections to Lavater's unscientific theories had been answered by Zimmermann in an article published in the Deutschen Merkur by challenging Lichtenberg publicly to submit his own silhouette for analysis. This thinly veiled allusion to his severe physical deformity failed to sting Lichtenberg to a response, but it aggravated his aversion to a man who resorted to such tactics in a dialogue concerned with scientific and general truth.²⁰

Besides attacking Zimmermann in publications, and latinizing his official title privately to Hofmedicus (e.g. F 744, F 928, F 992), Lichtenberg denounced him as a pretentious writer, (e.g. F 985) and referred to him as Don Pomposo.²¹ He also sketched out various plans for satires against him; in all of them Zimmermann appears as vainglorious and empty headed. This role is expressed in the name he

²⁰ Mautner, Lichtenberg. Geschichte seines Geistes, p. 175.

²¹ Promies, Vol. IV, p. 738.

is given in some of these satiric fragments, Don Zebra, an ass distinguished among the common herd by his striped and ostentatious coat.

In J 616 Lichtenberg speaks of "Don Zebra's versteinerte Prose," using the word "petrified" which occurs so frequently in the Nightwatches; like Bonaventura he uses it as metonym for lack of sense and animation. In J 667 an epitaph is suggested for Zimmermann: "Grand philosophe, grand Médecin et grand fou." Close to this is J 664, which describes a relationship which parallels that between Kreuzgang and Olearius: "He despises me, because he does not know me, and I despise his accusations, because I know myself."

Whoever has stood model to Olearius, he is presented as an archetypal hypocrite and anti-Faust, the intellectual who uses his gifts and opportunities exclusively for personal advancement, and cares only for the prestige of office and nothing for the responsibilities. He has no interest whatsoever in the welfare of those entrusted to his care, and thus represents all the types against whom the Scriblerians directed their satiric wit, including statesmen and politicians. Bonaventura's attack on this Scriblerian target is conducted in a micro-

Dunciad for which he has chosen the form of a mock Socratic-dialogue.

Swift refers to this tradition when he parodically reduces the Socratic afflatus to inflatus in his Tale.²² Kreuzgang also alludes to Plato's theory on madness, when he speaks in the Second Nightwatch of his own "superpoetic hours," and recommends his "nightwatchman's horn as a genuine antipoeticum." As so often, he ends his general discourses with satiric critique of the moderns in the manner of Swift, for he continues, "This remedy is cheap and of the greatest importance as well, since people in the present day follow Plato in considering poetry to be a rage, with the sole difference that he derived this rage from heaven and not from the booby hatch" (p. 37).

In the Seventh Nightwatch Kreuzgang combines a clever satire on law with further ridicule of contemporary writers, when he argues that "inspiration is to be equated with drunkenness," but that it "absolves from punishment if the drunken person has not put himself in to this condition culpose, which obviously is not to be assumed in the case of an inspired man, since inspiration is a gift

²² Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 361.

of the gods" (p. 123). It is this defense which lands him in the madhouse.²³

There, Kreuzgang closely watches his fellow sufferers and familiarizes himself with their case histories, but none of them respond to his presence. The Socratic dialogue requires a partner eager for instruction and keen to learn the truth. While Socrates meets such companions, Kreuzgang is not so lucky. All he encounters is indifference. Cells represent the total withdrawal of each individual; everyone is committed to his own fixation, and there is not a spark of the interaction through which the Socratic method takes effect. Kreuzgang's lively discourse elicits no response from anybody. It turns into a lonely monologue to which Olearius only reacts by occasionally shaking his head.

Like the cases under his care, this physician has no interest in anyone but himself. He is dedicated to the smooth running of his institution, but not to the welfare of those entrusted to him. The lack of communication and cooperation, and the tragic isolation of man is demonstrated in this

²³ Cf. Eccl. IX, 16-18, starting "Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard."

Bedlam-microcosm by the grotesque charade of the official medical round.

Only the Insane World Creator, one of the cases whom Kreuzgang introduces to the ineffective physician, speaks at length. His attitude, however, admits of no discussion. He is case No. 9, a further recall of Swift's chapter on madness. His monologue deals with the important problems which agitate Kreuzgang, but it provides a reversed perspective on them: the view of an outsider watching the antics of man from a detached distance. Before No. 9 goes into any details he declares: "things have got more and more crazily confused on the globe, and I don't know whether I should laugh or be vexed over it" (p. 149). Bonavventura confirms thereby the serio-comic duality of his whole satire, even at the beginning of a speech which allows very little scope for humor and complacency, for it puts "ultimate philosophical positions . . . to the test." It is thus central to the whole text, for "the menippea is a genre of 'ultimate questions'."²⁴

The World Creator develops two types of philosophical positions: those pertaining to religion, and those concerning natural science. The inverted scale from which the enigmatic madman

²⁴ Bakhtin, Problems, p. 115.

contemplates the world as through his "magnifying glass" (p. 149) is brilliantly sustained by continued use of diminutives--mainly translated by use of the adjective little--and by a time scale in which seconds stand for centuries. In this context, man's achievements predictably pale into insignificance. The boldness of the speech consists in ascribing to God a large part of the blame for the failure. When he declares, "This tiny speck, into which I blew a living breath and called it man, does now and then annoy me with his little spark of godhead which I implanted in him in overhaste and over which he became deranged," he reestablishes not only Plato's connection between madness and divinity, but also casts doubt on God's omnipotence and the absolute perfection of his plans. The real identity of this provocative speaker is carefully concealed by the mad-house allegory.

To reconcile the idea of a benevolent and omniscient creator with the prevalence of misery and suffering on earth is one of the problems to which eighteenth-century religious philosophy devoted much thought. Bonaventura's World Creator dismisses most of the ingenious answers when he declares: "the speck fancied itself to be god and constructed systems in which it admired itself" (p. 151). He does not

suggest any better solutions himself, for that is not the aim of the *menippea*. The satirist merely sets out to draw attention to problems, to disturb complacency, and, if at all possible, to induce thoughtful reactions. The "Monolog of the Insane World Creator" is admirably suited to this purpose, for it confirms that mankind's tragedy is to be afflicted with "the premonition of god which it carries about inside," and which "causes it to be more and more profoundly confused, without in the process ever reaching a clear decision" (p. 149).

Though this verdict is taken as final, hope is not entirely destroyed. By affirming the value of "the gay flower world, with the children who play among them" (p. 149), youth and innocence are left as reason to believe that the exhausting cycle of rebirth and renewed folly may yet be broken. What Bonaventura casts in doubt is not God's creative power, but his continuing interest in a particular, and rather insignificant star, a thought which has already troubled the psalmist:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
Ps. VIII, 3-4.

The same short psalm also praises the regenerative potential of children to which Bonaventura alludes

repeatedly: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength" (Ps. VIII, 2).

The first part of No. 9's monologue recognizes man's unquenchable thirst for knowledge as a consequence of the divine spark implanted in him. It also acknowledges the narrow restrictions under which this divine gift can be exercised, by a brief allusion to puppets. After declaring: "I should have left the doll uncarved!" (p. 151), the Creator mentions various possibilities of dealing with the problem, and in passing shakes the Argument of Desire, on which the enlightenment placed its hopes for salvation.

After the metaphysical proof of God and immortality--that the soul is different in nature and consistency from the body, and therefore of necessity imperishable--was undermined by Locke and demonstrated as untenable by his successors, the moral argument was introduced instead. Johnson resorts to it in his Rasselas: "Since the common events of the present life happen alike to the good and bad, it follows from the justice of the Supreme Being, that there must be another state of existence, in which a just retribution shall be made, and every man shall be happy and miserable according to his

works."²⁵ This argument was considerably weakened by Shaftsbury, with his emphasis on the completeness of the secular moral system, and by Hume's rejection of a possible separation of good and evil, for he argued that Heaven and Hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad, but that the greatest part of mankind "float betwixt vice and virtue."²⁶

Johnson was much preoccupied with these problems. So was Bonaventura, as demonstrated by the twice repeated tale of the two brothers, in which the traditional twin division of the good and the evil side of the same personality is hopelessly intermixed and confused. When his World Creator speaks of man, the mote who "does often dream so very pleasantly of immortality and thinks, just because it dreams such a thing, it must come true" (p. 151), he mentions in one breath the comforting eighteenth-century doctrine and the counter-arguments and doubts about it.

The Argument of Desire "relies on "man's general dissatisfaction with the world, whether that world

²⁵ Samuel Johnson, The History of Rasselas Prince of Abyssinia. 1759. Chapt. II. (Editions of this work are numerous and chapters short, sometimes less than a page. Only Chapter numbers are therefore quoted).

²⁶ Robert G. Walker. Eighteenth-Century Arguments for Immortality and Johnson's 'Rasselas'. ELS Monograph Series Nr. 9 (University of Victoria, B.C., Canada, 1977), p. 25.

were just or unjust," and concludes from the general and persistent human wish for infinitely more than can be obtained in this life that there has to be a point beyond life towards which such overpowering yearning must be directed. "A moral God who would not allow man to desire in vain" has still to be presupposed, but the emphasis of this argument is now entirely "on the hopes and fears of men, attributes which might be verified empirically."²⁷

Kreuzgang is possessed by the desire on which this argument is based, and he is maddened by the human inability to assert with purely rational means the existence of "a moral God who would not allow man to desire in vain." This is also the answer Kant gave in his investigation of the potential and limitations of the human mind, which he laid out in his three Critiques. The final of these, the Kritik der Urteilskraft (1790) is divided into a "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" and a "Critique of Teleological Judgment," which takes away the comfort of Aristotle's teleological expectation that a final, but as yet unknown cause, will justify all seeming injustice and confusion on earth. Like Bonaventura, Kant does not reject this possibility out of hand. He merely determines that it must remain a hypothesis

²⁷ Walker, p. 26.

and cannot ever be proved by human means, for the order which humanity tries to impose on nature and history is only a reflection of its own need for accountability, and no proof of realities in the universe.

When the monologue is brought to a halt, Kreuzgang emphasises its importance by the Scriblerian method of condemnation. "What an infamous insanity that is," he interjects. "If a rational man came out with the like, people would surely confiscate it" (p. 151).

The seemingly spontaneous interposition explains why doctrinal doubts had to be uttered by one who enjoyed the traditional freedom of fools, and explains why satirists of all ages needed this archetype. The voice of insanity serves also the purpose for which Swift uses his Hack: it deprives the reader of clear instructions for interpretation and allows undecided conclusions. This is even more apparent in the second part of the "World Creator's" monologue, which deals with the implications of the newly emerging natural sciences on the view man has to take of himself and his role in the universe.

Lichtenberg was officially professor of experimental physics, and the physicists and their new systems are first to be considered by the madman,

while he is toying with a child's ball in his hand, reminiscent of Lichtenberg's vision in his dream of a scientist.²⁸ This brief and intensely poignant story raises the topical doubt of whether man is far-sighted enough to interfere in nature without destroying what he seeks to order and investigate, and Lichtenberg includes himself in the satire by taking over the role of the well-meaning, but fumbling scientist, much as Kreuzgang takes upon himself the part of the dedicated but disoriented philosopher. Interpretation of the dream is facilitated by the description of the old man whose benevolent serenity, and the deference which it induces in the beholder, leave no doubt about his divinity.

In Bedlam no such help is given, for the intention of the menippea is to stir up doubts, not to calm them. The only clues are contained in the monologue itself, and in the toying with the ball, which shakes the earth and affords--as the Creator well knows--"a broad field for the teleologists" (pp. 151 and 153).

Geology was also one of Lichtenberg's subjects, but the earthquake of Lisbon 1754 was an epochal event for the whole of Europe, because it showed the

²⁸ Promies, Vol. III, pp. 108-11, "Ein Traum."

flaws in religious complacency as well as in the enlightened reliance on progressive improvement of the human condition. The monologue refers to this landmark in the history of European thought, but refrains from taking active part in the controversy by cautiously interjecting the qualifying "perhaps," when the Creator speaks of the confusion which is aroused on earth "whenever I perhaps play ball and thereby a few dozen countries and cities collapse and a number of the ants are smashed" (p. 153).

The wish "to be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. III, 5) is exposed in all its presumption at the end of the monologue when the Creator exclaims: "By the devil! It is almost vexatious to be God, when such people carp at you!--I'd like to squash the whole ball!" . . . (p. 151). While the remark, and indeed the whole monologue, stresses God's power to put an end to man's endeavors at any time, it does not belittle these efforts, nor ridicule science in the manner of Swift. As was the case with Lichtenberg, Bonaventura does not doubt the validity of the natural sciences, only man's ability to deal with them in a responsible manner.

Just when the seriousness of No. 9's incoherent discourse becomes apparent and oppressive, Kreuzgang cuts in with a reminder that the scene of action is

after all a madhouse, and the speaker is only a fool. He does not, however, administer this sedative without acknowledging the enigmatic speaker as a Titan, and a thinker whose world view resembles that of Fichte (p. 153), the philosopher whose thoughts Lichtenberg studied at the close of his life, as shown by the final notes in his last waste book, and by his last letter.²⁹

None of these highly relevant issues elicit the slightest interest from Dr. Olearius, who shakes his head but refuses to get involved. Only at the very end of the chapter does he prescribe for Kreuzgang "much exercise and little or no thinking at all, because he was of the opinion that my delusion had come about through extravagant intellectual feasting, just as in the case of others indigestion arises through too copious physical enjoyment" (p. 157). Mental and physical intake, and the process of digestion belong to the satiric metaphors of the *menippea* since Petronius' "Feast of Trimalchio", the longest and best known episode of his Satyricon. Appropriately the real theme of this "Feast" is taste and tastelessness.

Significantly for the number of chapters in the Nightwatches, only fragments of the fifteenth and

²⁹ Promies, Vol. IV, p. 1011.

sixteenth book of the Satyricon have survived. Lichtenberg owned them in German, English and Latin versions (Nos. 146-48). Swift in particular made good use of Petronius' eating imagery. His definition of digressions as "late refinements in knowledge, running parallel to those of diet in our nation," and his repeated references to "olios" exploit also the derivation of satire from satura, a Roman dish, a type of cold salad in which a mixture of ingredients were combined, and made more palatable by plentiful addition of oil and vinegar.

Before Swift elaborates this satura metaphor in his "Digression in Praise of Digressions," he uses the simile of "an Iliad in a nutshell to prove that even famous works can be empty of content, and can resemble "a nutshell in an Iliad."³⁰ Kreuzgang paraphrases the simile in the Ninth Nightwatch when he speaks in connection with Schlegel about "a grand Iliad, issued in sixteenmo" (p. 153).³¹

³⁰ Gulliver's Travels et al., p. 356.

³¹ Schelling, long the leading candidate for Bonaventura, married Schlegel's wife Caroline in 1803; hence the remark was interpreted as expressing his resentment. Herrman Michel, who thinks that Caroline Schlegel-Schelling also had a hand in the writing, supports this view. Michel, pp. lxiii-lxiv. Lichtenberg knew the brothers Schlegel well, see Promies, Vol. II, p. 712. He was also well acquainted with Caroline's family, for her father, Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791), was professor of philosophy and oriental languages in Göttingen.

Literary critique, including the mentioning of particular names to epitomize general failings and abuses, is an organizing principle of Pope's Dunciad, as well as of Bonaventura who likewise castigates general shortcomings through examples from literature and from the world of writers. Like the Dunciad and all Scriblerian satires, Bonaventura combines "extraordinary philosophical universalism and a capacity to contemplate the world on the broadest possible scale," with "moral-psychological experimentation," and a special "concern with current and topical issues."³² For the author of the Nightwatches, unlike the Scriblerians, scientific progress is an integral part of this comprehensive pattern. His Ninth Nightwatch ends very much like the Dunciad, with the representative of Queen Dulness in firm control, exulting in his own ignorance and lack of imagination. But Bonaventura introduces a positive twist, for Olearius only thinks he has the last word. Unperceived, Kreuzgang establishes his own superiority, and demonstrates his contempt by the remark: "I let him go."

By ending inconclusively, the chapter defies the attempts of Dulness to establish absolute rule. Kreuzgang rescues from the encounter an unrepentant

³² Bakhtin, Problems, pp. 115-18.

attitude and unshaken belief in Kant's precept that, while teleology cannot be proved, it has to be retained as the only feasible working hypothesis. There is no other way than to labor in the limited light of the divine spark which drives man towards goals he may sense, but not see.

This interpretation agrees with Kreuzgang's reference to the bust of Socrates and to "Scaramouch's folly." Scaramouch is a sub-species of the fool from the commedia dell' arte, less popular than Harlequin, whose attire the centaur in Young's title plate is wearing. Justus Möser in his Harlekin oder Verteidigung des Grotesk-Komischen recommends the use of exaggerated and even grotesque situations to draw attention to abuses which are so common that they are no longer noticed, and are complacently accepted. Of Scaramouche he notes as main characteristic the honest joy with which he laughs behind the back of those who have hit and misused him because he has outwitted them by wearing the fool's dress of Harlequin, and his persecutors do not know who he really is.³³ Lichtenberg found this passage so relevant that he copied it verbatim (KA 237). Möser's characterization confirms Scaramouche as the perfect comic complement to the tragic Socrates, and

³³ Möser, Sämtliche Werke, Vol. 2, p. 328.

reveals the two names as synonyms for heroic and mock-heroic, tragic and comic defiance of the rule of ignorance. Kreuzgang spurns officialdom and the ruling opinions with the assertion: "It is my idée fixe that I consider myself more rational than the reason deduced in systems and wiser than professional wisdom" (p. 157).

Mirrored in the micro-cosmos of the lunatic asylum, the Ninth Nightwatch--Bonaventura's digression on madness--represents the tragedy of man as the self-centered misapplication of the divine gift of reason. Using the grotesque exaggeration recommended by Möser as the organizing principle of the chapter, Bonaventura draws attention to the devastating, and at the same time ludicrous misappropriation of the divine spark that has been entrusted to mankind. Kreuzgang's refusal to accept Oehlmann's cure indicates an alternative to the triumph of Dulness, for it indicates congruence with Böhme's mystic belief, that suffering willingly borne must lead to redemption. A further mental attitude which can transcend the realm of Dulness is love, which for this reason needs a different chapter. Kreuzgang concludes therefore by "saving another nightpiece for . . . Maytime in the madhouse."

CHAPTER VIII

HENRY FIELDING (1707-54) SATIRIC DOUBLE VISION AND EMBLEMATIC NARRATIVE.

The Augustan satiric tradition was continued by Fielding, who acknowledged his debt to Scriblerian techniques by repeated use of the pseudonym "Scriblerus Secundus."¹ Like the Augustans he took as his models the best of the classic writers from whom, like the Scriblerians, he learned a superior and fluent command of rhetoric. While master of all rhetorical techniques, Fielding placed particular emphasis on that part of the Aristotelian tradition which insists that every case has at least two sides, and hence should be considered under dual aspects.

This doubling developed new dimensions in Fielding's writing. He evolved it not only into a confrontation of good and evil persons, but carried duality into his characters, most of whom exhibit mixed motives and mingled natures in accordance with the precepts of Shaftesbury and Hume. Fielding also

¹ F. Homes Dudden, Henry Fielding, His Life, Works, and Times. 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 60, n. 9.

mixed genres, and freely combined elements from quite different literary categories. In drama he therefore preferred the double focus of tragi-comedy, and in prose he fused elements of drama, romance, satire, essay, and newspaper reporting.² The satiric orientation of this mixture is described in the introduction to Tom Jones (I. i.). Called a "bill of fare to the feast," it paraphrases the original meaning of satire, which is *satura*, and plays on the metaphors of food and digestion, inherent in the satiric tradition. These images are not restricted to this initial chapter, but freely used in many different contexts.

The satiric spice with which Fielding binds his many literary ingredients together is applied in the spirit of Shaftsbury's idea of ridicule as test of truth.³ Shaftesbury's maxim, much quoted during the eighteenth century, is paraphrased by Kreuzgang who combines, as so often, insights from literature with

² Brian McCrea, "Romances, Newspapers, and the Style of Fielding's *True History*," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 1981, Vol. III, pp. 471-480.

³ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury. "A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm," (1708) Section II. In Enlightened England. Rev. ed. Ed. Wylie Sypher (1947; New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), p. 201, "How comes it to pass, then, that we appear such cowards in reasoning, and are so afraid of the test of ridicule?"

impeccable scientific imagery when he declares in one of his aphoristic comments:

A satire is like a touchstone, and every metal that brushes against it leaves behind the token of its worth or worthlessness. (p. 117)

How this test of irony is employed by Fielding, and penetrates into his style and diction, is shown by Glenn W. Hatfield, who investigated Fielding's use of irony and recognized it as "a way of speaking truth in a corrupt medium," namely a language in which terms like honour, love and truth were commonly so often used to denote the very opposite of what they were originally intended to convey. Hatfield places satire on medicine and law prominently into this context, and states that "Fielding's ridicule of medical and legal jargon, of ranting sermon oratory and of other verbal sins he associates with the professions is nearly always relevant to larger social and ethical evils."⁴ This expanded vision is shared by Kreuzgang, and is particularly noticeable in his attack upon the professions in the address to his "Beloved fellow citizens" in the Sixth Nightwatch (pp. 101-07).⁵

⁴ Glenn W. Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 6, p. 127.

⁵ Cf. Eccl. IX, 16-18.

Brian McCrea has found that Fielding's doubling, through integration of styles, and thus of values, extends even to "a balanced and conjunctive sentence structure that is best described as symmetrical," and that this syntactic twinning allows "persistent linking of two types of value in a symmetrical frame." Bonaventura is too concise to allow himself the leisure of such balanced periods. He achieves thematic and stylistic counterpoints by a staccato technique in which episodes, ideas and sentences rapidly follow each other, and frequently change direction, but are bonded by satire, which unifies incongruent ingredients. This method enables him to present a concentrated and often paradoxical amalgam of ideas, for Bonaventura, like Fielding, "certifies serious comedy as a meaningful bridge for the gap between divine and secular worlds."⁶

Fielding's elegant periods create the detachment which is necessary for such a panoramic view of the human condition; but his most important stylistic device--the authorial voice--is so filled with empathy for all the characters that Fielding's satire looses the Swiftian sting and softens with feeling. While Fielding's pervading aim is to expose hypocrisy and unmask pretentiousness, he shows also a

⁶ McCrea, Romances, p. 477, p. 480, and p. 477.

willingness to bear with human shortcomings, as these are an integral part of the dual nature of man. Fielding's hallmark is therefore a "superb balance between satire and sentiment,"⁷ and, corresponding with this double focus, one of his major artistic accomplishments is the ability to discuss serious concerns in light and comic tones.⁸

Lichtenberg admired Fielding's "philosophy of life," (F 1169) and owned his works in 12 vols. (No. 1643). His interest in the English author preceded, however, this London edition of 1775. Entries from Notebooks A to L show appreciation and understanding of a writer of whom Lichtenberg said: ". . . his foundling is certainly one of the best works ever written. Had he known how to arouse just a little more empathy for Sophia, and had he been at times somewhat more concise in his authorial remarks, perhaps no other work would surpass it" (F 1074).⁹

⁷ Brian McCrea, Henry Fielding and the Politics of Mid-Eighteenth-Century England (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), p. 167.

⁸ J. Paul Hunter, Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1975, p. 104.

⁹ Lichtenberg showed, however, considerable appreciation of Sophia by bestowing her name on married women whom he wanted to honour especially. See Promies IV, No. 490, p. 634, letter to Johann Gottwert Müller, March 31, 1785. "Reccomend me to your dear Sophie: I know now no better name for your dear wife."

This entry is from August or September 1778; the diary of 1771, which was written almost entirely in English, has a remark for June 30th in that language which also attests to Lichtenberg's special fondness for Fielding:

I read the 3^d volume of the foundling [sic] and part of the 4th. I know no english [sic] book of the belles lettres kind, which I should like better to be the author of than Tom Jones, Mr. Adams¹⁰ preferred the Spectator. Mr. Adams knew Fieldings [sic] son at school, he tells me, he was a good genius, and looked always dirty.¹¹

A fortnight later, on July 14th, the diary relates, also in English: "Lockt up in my room, finished Joseph Andrews." It was not the first reading, for Joseph Andrews figures already in A 99 and Parson Adams in B 290. D 666 recalls a passage from the Voyage to Lisbon. This entry bears the title "To be cast in plaster or gold" and combines a number of quotations, many of which are in English. Without

¹⁰ On his return from the first journey to England, Lichtenberg escorted Charles Adams and his brother Jacob from London to Göttingen, where both remained under his special care until their return home in July 1772. Ed. Joost, Briefwechsel, Vol. I, No. 69, p. 127, letter to Joel Paul Kaltenhofer, July 18, 1772, also letters Nos. 70 and 71. Mr. Adams is further mentioned in letter No. 545, which reveals some of the non-academic problems Lichtenberg had to face in his capacity as a tutor.

¹¹ Promies, Vol. II, p. 606. Lichtenberg's interest in Henry Fielding and his background extended to his blind brother, Sir John Fielding, whose activities he watched while in London during 1774-75, see also ed. Gumbert, Lichtenberg in England, Vol. I, p. 90.

giving chapter and verse, it also includes a sentence from the last pages of Joseph Andrews, a position which bestows symbolic significance on the remark:

Undressing to Fanny was properly discovering, not putting off ornaments (IV. xvi.).

Lichtenberg here touches upon a recurrent motive not only in Joseph Andrews, but in Fielding's entire oeuvre. Mark Spilka has drawn attention to The Champion for January 24, 1740, where "Fielding . . . cites Plato to the effect that men would love virtue if they could see her naked." Spilka demonstrates how states of undress and nakedness equate in Fielding's first novel with unmasking and revealing the truth. Thus when Joseph is discovered naked on the road in an episode which parallels, though negatively, the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, Fielding tests the willingness of each of the passengers in a passing stagecoach "to accept Joseph as he is, for what he is--a defenseless human being."¹²

Bonaventura likewise uses nakedness in this Platonic sense, when he reveals as the only treasure in a strangely discovered chest the "stark naked"

¹² Mark Spilka, "Comic Resolution in Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews'," (from College English, XV, Oct. 1953, pp. 11-19) repr. Henry Fielding und der englische Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ed. Wolfgang Iser (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 93-94.

little Kreuzgang (p. 65). The German term mutternacht recalls the discovery of Joseph Andrews in a ditch after a robbery, "sitting upright, as naked as ever he was born" (I. xii.), and emphasises the symbolism of the event. Its emblematic nature is further underlined by the parents with whom Kreuzgang is united at the end of the work, just like Joseph and Tom also find their true parents only at the end of their histories.

In the "Second Woodcut" (p. 61) Kreuzgang refers with modesty to his original state as "sans all moveable property," ohne alle fahrende Habe, a legal term meaning without any possessions. His state is therefore emblematic for uncorrupted human potential, just as it is envisaged by Dr. Harrison, the enlightened paragon in Fielding's last novel Amelia:

The nature of man is far from being in itself evil; it abounds with benevolence, charity, and pity, coveting praise and honour, and shunning shame and disgrace. Bad education, bad habits, and bad customs, debauch our nature, and drive it headlong as it were into vice. The governors of the world, and I am afraid the priesthood, are answerable for the badness of it. Instead of discouraging wickedness to the utmost of their power, both are too apt to connive at it (IX. v.).

Kreuzgang is discovered like Tom Jones in "the beauty of innocence" (I. iii.), and their foundling status sets both boys apart from social convention. In their

different ways they can, therefore, represent mankind rather than a particular social strata.

The somewhat static personality of Tom Jones, and of most other characters in Fielding, has been discussed by many critics. In the Nightwatches, instead of Fielding's contemporary plot, we are confronted with abstracts parables, and reflections on reflections; Kreuzgang is even more static and does not change at all through his nocturnal experiences.¹³ Following Bergson, Maynard Mack sees such changeless personalities as the mark of the comic writer, who "subordinates the presentation of life as experience . . . to the presentation of life as spectacle."

Mack's description of comic techniques in Fielding illuminates also Bonaventura's methods, for Mack sees tragic action as self-discovery, and comic action as self-exposure, with

"the emphasis . . . on the permanence and typicality of human experience, as projected in persistent social species whose sufficient destiny is simply to go on revealing themselves to us. For this reason, the great comic characters of literature whether Shakespeare's, Fielding's, or Dickens' do not essentially change. They are enveloped in events without being involved by them, and remain immutable like Fielding's lawyer, who has been 'alive

¹³ E.g. Paulsen, Nachtwachen, p. 175, "Bonaventura does not want to know anything, for he already knows everything."

these four thousand years' and seems good for as many more."¹⁴

Such tentative affinities in themes, structure and outlook abound between Fielding's work and the Nightwatches. They show how closely related the world of Bonaventura is to the eighteenth century and to Fielding, who himself drew extensively on the knowledge and epistemology of his age, and in turn had his writings copied and diffused by innumerable followers, especially in Germany.¹⁵ This is true even, or rather particularly, where the Nightwatches appear most steeped in romantic coloration, for precisely those elements which are primarily regarded as typical for the German romantic period correspond most closely to important focal points of Fielding's work.

¹⁴ Maynard Mack, "Joseph Andrews and Pamela," (1948) repr. Fielding. A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Ronald Paulson, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962, pp. 52-58, p. 58, p. 57.

¹⁵ E.g. Blanchard records that Amelia was reprinted in Frankfurt in 1763, 1764, 1768; in Leipzig in 1781, 1781-82, 1797. Frederic T. Blanchard, Fielding the Novelist. A Study in Historical Criticism (1926; New York: Russel & Russel, 1966), p. 181. Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 182. reports that of the at least 283 German novels published between 1774 and 1778, 50 or more bore as chief or secondary title Geschichte des . . . or Geschichte der . . ., in clear indication of the influence of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones on German letters.

Echoes of Cervantes have been variously noted in Bonaventura's text, and, as Tieck translated Don Quixote at the turn of the century (1799-1803), interest in Cervantes is often claimed as a characteristic of the German romantics. In England, however, Cervantes was much quoted during the enlightenment, most of all by Fielding, whose admiration for the Spanish author and indebtedness to him are facts to which he himself draws constant attention. Fielding's early play, Don Quixote in England, was rewritten and performed in 1734, and passages referring to Cervantes occur frequently in his works. Particularly well known are references in Joseph Andrews, III. i., "Matter prefatory in praise of biography," and in Tom Jones, XIII. i., "An Invocation." Here Fielding apostrophizes "Genius" by summing up the inspiration of tragi-comic satire:

Come, thou that hast inspired thy Aristophanes,
thy Lucian, thy Cervantes, thy Rableais, thy
Moliere, thy Shakespeare, thy Swift, thy
Marivaux, fill my pages with humour till
mankind learn the good nature to laugh only at
the follies of others, and the humility to
grieve at their own.

Lichtenberg shared Fielding's predilection for these writers who left their imprint on Western literature, and in particular on the menippea.¹⁶ How

¹⁶ Lichtenberg's familiarity with Pierre Marivaux (1688-1763) is shown by an anecdote about him recorded in J 232.

closely his artistic values coincided with Fielding's is also shown by their joint admiration of Hogarth.¹⁷ Fielding, as Moore observes, "is defining his own art in terms of that of the painter."¹⁸ With Lichtenberg and Bonaventura such visual experience has become a habit.

Esteem for Garrick, and veneration of Shakespeare, to whom both found access through Garrick's interpretations, is another bond between Fielding and Lichtenberg. Fielding pays tribute to Garrick's genius by describing the same scene which Lichtenberg chose as the focal point of his Letters from England: Hamlet's confrontation with the ghost of his father. This famous account of Garrick's impact on an audience occurs in Tom Jones (VI. v.), where Tom visits a performance of Hamlet with his companion Partridge who "was all attention." As Partridge refuses to accept that Garrick is not really seeing a ghost, and is not genuinely terrified by the apparition, and as he contends that the actor is no good because anybody would behave like him in a

¹⁷ Among many examples is Fielding's description of Mrs. Partridge (Tom Jones, II, iii.): "Whether she sat to my friend Hogarth or no, I will not determine, but she exactly resembled the young woman who is pouring out her mistress's tea in the third picture of the Harlot's Progress." Lichtenberg refers to this passage in his Commentary (Promies, Vol. III, p. 762).

¹⁸ Moore, p. 108.

similar situation, he offers the highest praise of Garrick's art. The incident reveals the ideal which the eighteenth century admired: to explore and get to know man's nature, not individually, but generally. Partridge is taken by Lichtenberg as just such a type, when he speaks in F 1096 of "a Partridge or a bad minister."

Partridge's fear-ridden "imagination . . . possessed with the horror of an apparition, converted every object he saw or felt into nothing but ghosts and spectres" (VII. xiv.), and provides a foil to Tom's bravery and common sense. Partridge also affords Fielding the opportunity for enlightened comment on the presumed existence of ghosts, which caused much controversy during the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Bonaventura's learned footnote, referring to an article of the subject, deprives his own ghosts of all romantic terror and immediacy, and banishes them to the realm of intellectual speculation (p. 239).

¹⁹ Dr. Johnson's remarks sum up the position of many enlightened intellectuals: "It is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it; but all belief is for it." Boswell, p. 900. For German interest in the topic cf. Friedrich Schiller, Der Geisterseher (1787-89).

Like ghosts, Shakespeare was also differently experienced by the enlightenment and by the romantics. The latter admired him as a genius who created his own world and freely broke the neo-classic rules. For the former it was his unique gift to "copy nature" and create so many characters, all of them unmistakably individual and yet also clearly recognizable as universal prototypes.²⁰ This made him a favorite of those eighteenth-century thinkers who were committed to the Socratic command "Know thyself." Like Bonaventura and Lichtenberg, Fielding refers to him frequently in this sense, bestowing by Shakespeare's testimony the seal of truth on his own observations. The introspective Hamlet is for Fielding, as for Lichtenberg and Bonaventura, the favorite, but he also draws freely on Shakespeare's other work. He describes the nocturnal appearance of Tom in bandages streaked with blood "so that the

²⁰ The orientation toward generality was also one of Lichtenberg's dominant tendencies. Fielding gives it perfect voice when he describes a sentinel who fainted after having witnessed the appearance of Tom Jones, looking worse than the "bloody Banquo" and adds: "I wish with all my heart some of those actors who are hereafter to represent a man frightened out of his wits had seen him, that they might be taught to copy nature instead of performing several antic tricks and gestures for the entertainment and applause of the galleries." (VII. xiv.)

Lichtenberg's literary criticism of writers who imitate famous works without having observed reality for themselves is here presented in the form of stage metaphors.

bloody Banquo was not worthy to be compared to him" (VII. xiv.). Bonaventura uses the same reference.²¹

Fielding's "Comparison between the world and the stage," records and develops the long tradition of stage metaphors, and expands and paraphrases the speech by Jacques, the fool in As You Like It, (II. vii.) which also compares "all the world" to a stage. Fielding added many new facets to this imagery, and translated also the philosophical and religious dilemma of the dual nature of man into a theatre idiom:

A single bad act no more constitutes a villain in life than a single bad part on the stage. The passions, like the managers of a playhouse, often force men upon parts without consulting their judgement, and sometimes without any regard to their talents. Thus the man as well as the player may condemn what he himself acts; nay, it is common to see vice sit as awkwardly on some men as the character of Iago would on the honest face of Mr. William Mills
(VIII. i.).

Don Juan's stupefaction at the end of the Othello tragedy in the Fifth Nightwatch reflects this character assessment precisely.

From the start of his digression on the world and the stage, Fielding acknowledges his indebtedness to tradition:

²¹ Don Juan is both attracted and scared by a veiled woman "as if the riddle of his life were hidden behind these veils, and . . . he feared the moment when they would fall as though a bloody ghost of Banquo should rise from them" (p. 89).

The world hath been often compared to the theatre, and many grave writers as well as the poets have considered human life as a great drama, resembling in almost every particular those scenical representations which Thespis is first reported to have invented and which have been since received with so much approbation and delight in all polite countries. (VII. i.)

Aristotle is then credited with calling the stage "an imitation, of what really exists." Fielding enumerates "reasons which have induced us to accept this analogy between the world and the stage," among them "the brevity of life." In support of his own opinions, he quotes Shakespeare, and also part of "a poem Deity, published about nine years previously and long since buried in oblivion--proof that good books no more than good men do always survive the bad." World history is here called "the vast theatre of time," and the deity is addressed as the stage director. The spectacle ends with the total dissolution of the world:

Then at Thy nod the phantoms pass away;
No traces left of all the busy scene,
But that remembrance says--
the things have been."

To this display of stage metaphors Fielding adds:

In all these, however, and in every other similitude of life to the theatre, the resemblance hath been always taken from the stage only. None, as I remember, have at all considered the audience at this great drama.

Fielding's chapter on "A comparison between the world and the stage" is a key treatise on this

subject. Bonaventura studied it to good advantage and turned its theories into practice. He adopted the viewer perspective recommended by Fielding, and used it repeatedly, as when he confides to the reader: "I always step before an alien unusual human life with the same feelings as before a curtain behind which a Shakespearean drama is to be produced" (p. 67).

The drama which he thus introduces concerns an abortive suicide attempt; when "everything had already been finished, right up to the falling of the curtain . . . the man's arm, already lifted for the fatal stroke, suddenly grew rigid" (p. 69). At the end of the episode Bonaventura sums up an incident rich in tragic potential, Shakespearean allusions, and theatre metaphors by directly addressing the reader:

Take the matter from its lighter side; for it is amusing and worth the effort to attend this great tragicomedy, world history, as spectator up to its last act, and you can give yourself that quite unique pleasure finally, when at the end of all things, as sole survivor, you stand above the general deluge upon the last projecting mountain peak to hiss the entire production on your own hook, and then wild and angry, a second Prometheus, hurl yourself into the abyss." (p. 73)

As in the poem quoted by Fielding, the stage analogy is retained consistently to the conclusion, but by following Fielding's suggestions, Bonaventura imbues

it with urgency and dramatic desperation, and turns the poem's tone of elegiac resignation into one of disturbing defiance.

Stage metaphors are more to Fielding and Bonaventura than mere stylistic embellishments. They are an important distancing device which removes the action from the confusion of everyday life, and presents it already edited: abstracted, reflected and restructured. On a stage, incidental detail has been eliminated and the outcome is already pre-ordained. Nothing can be changed and the action calls therefore not for active intervention, only for intellectual participation. Besides the *menippea*, the English Rehearsal Plays also made ample use of theatre emblems, and Fielding delighted and excelled in this genre.

Hamlet, which Bonaventura uses as one of the many frames within which he displays his ideas, was already similarly employed by Fielding in his satiric Tragedy of Tragedies or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great (1731). As J. P. Hunter has shown, echoes of Shakespeare's tragedy permeate the whole play. Their intended effect is not parody, rather a reminder of the dramatic tradition at its best, against which lesser writers can be set off and

satirized.²² For this reason satires, and especially the manippea, need frequent referral to patterns of perfection. Fielding, Lichtenberg and Bonaventura are particularly inventive and versatile in integrating literary highlights and insights into their own work.

Hunter has also followed the overtones of Fenelon's satiric prose epic Télémaque²³ in Tom Jones. He found that the similarities extend to structure as well as to themes and incidents. Both works consist of 18 books divided into 3 equal parts, and in each section the hero gets involved with an "earthly" lady.²⁴ In similar fashion Fielding also uses Don Quixote, Le Sage's Gil Blas, Scarron's Roman comique, Marivaux' Marianne and Le paysan parvenu, besides the classic examples of the Homeric

²² Hunter, p. 29.

²³ Lichtenberg owned the work in a Spanish edition of 1756 (No. 1678). His high appreciation of Fenelon is expressed in L 211, where he suggests that every king and regent should use his Directions pour la conscience d'un Roi as a guidebook, and refers to Herder's remarks about this treatise.

In L 186 Lichtenberg recommends that important thinkers should reveal their methods of study and preparation. He refers to Dr. Johnson as having also recommended this as a routine that would benefit humanity, and quotes him--in English--"such is the labour of those who write for immortality." The note closes with the question: "How, for instance, was Telemach written?"

²⁴ Hunter, pp. 133-35. See also Rita Terras for Bonaventura's use of this technique.

Odyssey.²⁵ Virgil's Aeneid is deliberately echoed in the last and more sombre novel Amelia, as Fielding himself points out in his The Covent Garden Journal (Nr. 8, January 28, 1752). So is the Book of Job, and biblical allusions and paraphrased parables are frequent in all his novels.

Fielding, as Bonaventura after him, is not imitating or quoting at random, but aims at an consolidation of Western tradition to create what Hunter calls a "telescopic, universal and epical" panorama of life.²⁶ This vision aims at an integration of all possible aspects, and was also favoured by Lichtenberg, who added a scientific dimension to Fielding's combination of insights from literature, philosophy and art. In the menippea, however, the reader is expected to fuse these components. Thus "juxtaposition of contrary points of view" to expose "the conflict of comedy and gravity" and to give "the illusion of independence from the medium and agent of narration" is to Glenn W. Hatfield a deliberate device with which Fielding induces the reader to evaluate each situation for himself, and to test his own ethic against the

²⁵ Homer Goldberg deals particularly with these affinities in his The Art of Joseph Andrews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1969.

²⁶ Hunter, p. 216.

eventualities of life.²⁷ The same technique is used by Bonaventura, though in his concise and condensed text the changes between sentiment and cynicism, comedy and tragedy occur much more rapidly than in the leisurely narration of Fielding.

The independent and clearly defined authorial voice, one of Fielding's remarkable innovations, is given ample scope in his novels, especially in Tom Jones, where it takes over the introductory chapters of each book altogether. In the Nightwatches a corresponding voice becomes audible only in Kreuzgang's occasional asides, which have, however, the same function: to lead the reader into the frame of mind with which the author wants him to approach the text.²⁸

Apart from the authorial interpolations on a variety of topics, which are mainly presented in the guise of literary and generic discussions, Fielding also presents digressions of a different nature. These, like his main narration, are centered on parabolized human interest stories, like the rather lengthy tale of "The Man on the Hill" in Tom Jones (VIII. xi-xiv.). Bonaventura's digressions are

²⁷ Hatfield, p. 203.

²⁸ E.g. Wolfgang Iser "Die Leserrolle in Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews' und 'Tom Jones'." Ed. Iser, pp. 282-318.

short, and like his text, abstract and loose-jointed. To draw the connections, fill in the background, and supply the missing pieces is a task left to the reader. Recurrent themes are the signposts which help in this task.

Among Bonaventura's leitmotifs are masks and unmasking, themes also predominant in Fielding from his first comedy, Love in Several Masks (1728) and his first published poem, The Masquerade (1728) to his last novel Amelia, where a masquerade and its consequences play a prominent part (X, ii-iv.). Closely akin to stage metaphors, the mask has an emblematic function. It is metonymic of dissembling and hypocrisy, that sin against the spirit of truth which Fielding persistently attacks as one of the main causes for human disasters, small and domestic as well as public and great.

Also stage-related is the marionette imagery for which the Nightwatches are particularly renowned. This aspect is frequently assessed in conjunction with romantic interest in puppet performances, notably Kleist's essay "Über das Marionettentheater" (1810).²⁹ Puppetry flourished, however, in England, particularly during the eighteenth century. George Speaight states that

²⁹ E.g. Gillespie, Introduction, p. 19.

few periods of history can have been so sympathetic to the puppets as the eighteenth century, and never before could the puppets so naturally hold up the mirror of ridicule to their masters. Never before or since have puppets played quite so effective and so well publicized a part in fashionable society; never before or since have puppet theatres so successfully made themselves the talk of the town.

Speaight lists Hogarth and Swift among the keen observers of puppets, and notes that The Rehearsal at Gotham (1754) by John Gay, the Scriblerian, adapts the puppet-show incident from Don Quixote to English conditions.³⁰ The same episode is used and updated by Fielding in Tom Jones (XII. v.). In Don Quixote the audience takes passionate sides and becomes seriously involved in the miniature world, though not with quite such disastrous consequences as in the Fifteenth Nightwatch.

Fielding uses the puppets to burlesque the world of the theatre, which to him is but a metonym for the world at large. Bonaventura turns the events in the Fifteenth Nightwatch into a satire on the French revolution, but he, too, universalizes his immediate target into a repeat pattern of human folly. Like Fielding, he achieves this double vision by interjecting general remarks. Thus after reporting a

³⁰ George Speaight, The History of the English Puppet Theatre (London, 1955; New York: John de Graff, n.d.), pp. 92, 177, and 173.

rousing address to his "Dear Countrymen" verbatim, Kreuzgang remarks dryly, as to himself:

On the whole, whenever it happens not to be suffering from idées fixes, mankind is an honest, simple beast and easily accommodates itself to absolute contraries; indeed, I believe it capable, though today it has rent the light bond which fettered it, of tomorrow letting itself be cast in chains with the same enthusiasm. (p. 227)

All three incidents focus on spectator reaction, which is particularly spontaneous towards puppets, whose secret Speaight sees in "their ability to arouse the sympathetic imagination of their audience."³¹

Both Fielding and Bonaventura also use puppet imagery to demonstrate manipulation of people and events, and to highlight the limitations of free will, just as Kant has done at the very end of the First Part of his Critique of Practical Reason. There he argues that if human reason were ever powerful enough to understand God and eternity with its dreadful majesty, human actions would necessarily be reduced to mere mechanical reactions, so that as "in a marionette play, everybody would gesticulate well, but the figures would lack life."³²

³¹ Speaight, p. 269.

³² Immanuel Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (1788; Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973), pp. 232-33. Erster Teil, II. Buch, 2. Hauptstück, IX. Von der der praktischen Bestimmung des Menschen weislich

Fielding uses puppet-metaphors similarly in Jonathan Wild (1743, III. xi.), when he satirizes Robert Walpole, the once all powerful minister:

To say the truth, a puppet-show will illustrate our meaning better, where it is the master of the show (the great man) who dances and moves everything, whether it be the King of Muscovy or whatever other potentate alias puppet which we behold on the stage; but he himself keeps wisely out of sight, for should he once appear, the whole motion would be at an end.

After elaborating the simile somewhat further, Fielding draws the connection to the world at large:

It would suppose thee, gentle reader, one of very little knowledge in this world to imagine thou hast never seen some of these puppet-shows which are so frequently acted on the great stage.

Jonathan Wild contains also a chapter "Of hats" (II, vi.) in which hats are satirically substituted for the political disguises people assume to gain power. Fielding states his purpose right at the beginning: "As these persons wore different

angemessenen Proportion seiner Erkenntnisvermögen.

The sentences following directly after the marionette metaphor end and sum up the Kritik. They are especially relevant to the interpretation of the Nightwatches. Kant states here that to follow the moral law within will not assure any worldly advantages; but adhering to it allows man a view into the world beyond, albeit only a dim and indistinct one. All efforts of reason cannot achieve any certainty only a "very dark and ambiguous view into the future." The wisdom which created us cannot be understood in human terms, but has to be venerated as much in what it has revealed to human reason as in what it is withholding.

principles, i.e. hats, frequent dissensions grew among them." Bonaventura uses the conceit at the end of the Ninth Nightwatch, where he ridicules three of the most frequently attacked non-political targets in eighteenth-century satire, the medical, legal and religious professions. He identifies them with their respective doctor's hats and proposes to wear them all three like "a holy trinity," so he can reap in one person the benefits which these professions derive from the dead and dying (p. 155 and 157).

Even more than in his novels, Fielding applied the puppet-mirror of ridicule when writing for the stage. Several of his own plays were favorites with the Puppet-showmen of his day, and in 1730 he had even introduced Punch and Joan into his own "Puppet-Show," The Pleasures of the Town, which comprised the final act of the Author's Farce--though this satiric little drama was designed for human performers, not marionettes." The Author's Farce, presents in a comic vein the problems of a poor poet, beleaguered by worries and creditors. It satirizes the world of the theatre and of writers, but uses literary critique to hit at targets in the world at large, especially in politics.

"In March 1748--at the height of his activities as editor of The Jacobite's Journal and while he was

doubtless writing furiously to finish Tom Jones--Fielding opened his own puppet theatre in Panton Street under the name of 'Madame de la Nash'," as Martin Battestin found out. Fielding, as Battestin notes, "seems always to have delighted in the comedy of Punch and Joan and to have considered them, quite seriously, as a valid and vital, if minor, part of the satiric tradition of the English theatre."³³

Though Lichtenberg's notes on any one subject are intermittent, and the full extent of his interest in Fielding can only be surmised from fragmentary comments, L 602 and 606, which refer to The Historical Register for the Year 1736, show that he was reading Fielding's plays even at the end of his life, and that he studied their style and expressions.³⁴ The marionette play in The Author's Farce follows human action. This sequence is reversed in the Nightwatches, where the puppet interlude

³³ Martin C. Battestin, "Fielding and 'Master Punch' in Panton Street." Philological Quarterly, XLV, I, January, 1966, pp. 191-208, p. 192, p. 198. Punch corresponds to the German Hanswurst, the figure banned from the stage by Gottsched in 1730 in his Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen, where use of the monologue was also vetoed. Gillespie translates Hanswurst in the Nightwatches as "Clown."

³⁴ Cf. L 602: "Fielding has actually written a Preface to a Dedication. S. Vol. IV. p. 153."

L 606: "Under the rose (sub rosa) is also in Fielding (Historical Register Works T. IV. p. 189)."

precedes the realistic presentation, thereby accenuating the tragic, rather than the farcical aspects of the events.

Bonaventura's twice repeated love triangle has been taken as parody or burlesque of Schiller's Bräut von Messina which was written in 1801/02.³⁵ Rivalry between brothers for a bride was, however, long before that date a favorite theme of the Sturm und Drang, and Schiller himself had treated it already in his first tragedy The Robbers (1779/80). The theme of fraternal competition for the same girl may have been suggested to him by Thomas Otway's The Orphan (1680), in which the passion of twin brothers for the same young woman leads to a triple death, for Schiller's tragedies parallel other Otway plays. Don Carlos (1787) accords thematically with Otway's Don Carlos (1676), and the Revolt of Fiesco in Genua (1782) with Otway's Venice Preserv'd (1682).

Thomas Otway, a prototype of the poor, starving poet, whose frustrating life is vividly described by

³⁵ See Schillemeit, p. 29. Parallels were first noted by R. M. Meyer, "Nachtwachen von Bonaventura," Euphorion, Leipzig: Carl Fromme, 1903, Vol. 10, London: Johnson Reprint, 1967, pp. 583 ff. H. Michel expressed doubts that Bonaventura's aim should have been mere persiflage. He notes: "As so often in the Nightwatches, one feels that there must be more beneath the surface than meets the eye," p. xxxiii. See also Gillespie, Introduction p. 7, and n. 16, pp. 249-50.

Johnson, is mentioned several times by Fielding, who may himself have taken the brotherly rivalry in Tom Jones from The Orphan, especially as this particular tragedy is twice mentioned in the novel.³⁶ Though the theme of the antagonistic brothers goes back to Genesis, and was treated in depth by Milton in Paradise Lost, the biblical story lacks the topos of the contested bride. Price actually credits the remarkable popularity of this tragic human interest story during the Sturm and Drang to Fielding.³⁷

While the hostile brothers were a favorite theme in the German literature of the late eighteenth century, Lichtenberg's interest in the double extended much beyond individual case histories to every aspect of life and human nature. He even planned a satirical novel about Siamese twins. As it was to be called Der doppelte Prinz ³⁸ (J 1138, 1142,

³⁶ In VIII. x., Partridge meets with an old woman who "answered exactly to that picture drawn by Otway in his Orphan." In XI. v., another old woman "resembled her whom Chamont mentions in the Orphan."

³⁷ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 192.

³⁸ The title Der doppelte Prinz recalls Varro's manipula Bimarcus, The Double Marcus, "also known in English as 'The Double Varro' and 'Varro Split'." Bakhtin gives a summary of this satire, p. 117 and n. e. A "dialogue between the two Marcuses, that is between a person and his conscience, is in Varro presented comically." Varro's work helps to round off the contours of Lichtenberg's much too short and inconclusive satiric outline.

1144) it was presumably meant to carry political overtones, which may explain why the idea was never further developed. Lichtenberg's pursuit of polarity extended to scientific considerations, (e.g. J 1512) and to the ultimate questions which are already evoked in Hamlet's monologue. J 153 asks whether perhaps body and soul, too, correspond to a dual pattern, like man and wife, and so many other doubles which God has distinguished by special favour.

Albert Schneider specifically comments on the symbolic significance of Lichtenberg's view of dualism, and he has shown that Lichtenberg's twin-ideas were of considerable influence on the German romantics, especially on E. T. A. Hoffmann, with whom the Doppelgänger in literature is usually associated,³⁹ though Lichtenberg's Double Prince and Bonaventura's antithetical brothers, and nightly alter egos considerably predate Hoffmann.

Lichtenberg, as Price reports, was sometimes called the German Fielding.⁴⁰ Fielding's biographer, Wilbur L. Cross also recounts that

Lichtenberg, whose zeal for Fielding knew no bounds, declared that he was 'the greatest novelist in the world'; and not long before his death designed a novel on the pattern of 'Tom

³⁹ Schneider, "Le Double Prince," pp. 292-99.

⁴⁰ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 188, see also Promies, Vol. IV, p. 731, No. 892.

Jones'. Though the work was never completed, Lichtenberg was known, because of his trenchant wit and vast knowledge of men displayed in his miscellaneous writings, as 'The German Fielding'." 41

Lichtenberg's opinion that most German writers were deficient in wit as Sterne and Fielding practised it, and that such wit was impossible without thorough learning (Wissenschaft) is given in F 263. This appreciative remark displays an understanding of Fielding's scope and background knowledge, and a penetration of English satiric techniques, which was quite exceptional at the time.

Lichtenberg's own writing always aims at brevity, and at the utmost concentration of meaning. He does therefore not concern himself with descriptions or reiteration of reality, but--whether in metaphors, fables or short stories--presents parables and reflected views. Bonaventura likewise omits completely the "illusion of reality" which for Hogarth and Fielding was a ruling principle.⁴² Instead, the tense text contains emblematic abstracts of the ingredients which Fielding recommends in his Preface to Joseph Andrews for the "comic epic poem in prose": extended and comprehensive action, a large

⁴¹ Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, Vol. III (1918; New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 194.

⁴² Moore, p. 149.

circle of incidents, and a great variety of characters. Only essential and timeless features stand out against the dark backdrop of the sixteen nights, and against the Solomonic judgement, which Kant confirmed, that all earthly endeavour will amount in the end to very little or nothing. As for the meaning and meanings of "nothing," Fielding approaches Shakespeare in imaginative exploration. His "Essay on Nothing," playfully brings together serious and lighthearted thoughts, starting with considerations of "The Antiquity of the Word," and the assertion:

There is nothing falser than the old proverb which (like many other falsehoods) is in every mouth: "Ex nihilo nihil fit." Thus translated by Shakespeare, in *Lear*: "Nothing can come of nothing." Whereas in fact from nothing proceeds every thing.

The tone of the essay is mock serious; by deliberately misinterpreting some expressions Fielding forces the reader to realise that the word is open to widely differing explications and glosses over a multitude of ambiguities and paradoxes. He pronounces as falsehood the general assumption "That no one can have an idea of nothing." For his part Fielding believes men grossly deceive themselves who "confidently deny us the idea" of nothing or would substitute "something" for it. "Many very wise men . . . having spent their whole lives in the

contemplation and pursuit of nothing, have at last gravely concluded--That there is nothing in this world."⁴³

Far from expressing nihilism or existentialist despair, Fielding elaborates in Section III "On the Dignity of Nothing; and an endeavour to prove that it is the end as well as Beginning of all Things." He proceeds with irony and tongue in cheek, and demonstrates, for instance, that the dignity of infamous noblemen consists in "Nothing." In Fielding's serio-comic treatise solemn aspects are also considered, especially the Christian view "that the world is to have an end, i.e. to come to nothing." Self-mockery, a hall-mark of Fielding's satire, is operative in the final conclusion that "true virtue, wisdom, learning, wit, and integrity will most certainly bring their possessors--nothing."⁴⁴

The intellectual nightwatchman personifies this truth, though the reader has to follow him almost to the end of his self-revelation before he can fully

⁴³ The Complete Works of Henry Fielding. Vol. XIV, Miscellaneous Writings (Vol. I). Ed. W. E. Henley (rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), "An Essay on Nothing", pp. 309-319, pp. 310, 311, and 312.

⁴⁴ Fielding, Miscellaneous Writings (Vo. I)., pp. 315 ff., 317, and 319.

appreciate the dismal failures of Kreuzgang's blighted hopes to achieve "something." The "nothing," which appears throughout the text of the Nightwatches in Fieldingesque variations, is thus a satiric counterpoint to worldly aspirations and human creativity, which are symbolized by Kreuzgang's varied career.

Lichtenberg thought much about the ultimate meaning of the concept "nothing." Using, like Fielding, a syllogism, he noted early in 1773 in English, and therefore obviously as a quote:

A leg of mutton is better than nothing
 Nothing is better than heaven
 Therefore a leg of mutton is better than heaven
 (C 179).

With his usual analytical penetration he attributes the wrong conclusion to the ambiguity of "nothing," and declares the word in the first line a sub-species of that in the second. Efforts to define the word recur throughout his writings. They are always connected with the problems of existence, of which present personal life is seen as only a fleeting fragment. For instance, during one of his frequent death wishes, Lichtenberg hoped:

If only the dividing line were already passed.
 My God, how I long for the moment when time will cease to be time for me and I will return into the womb of the maternal all and nothing, where I slept while the Hainberg was formed, while Epicure, Caesar, Lucretius lived and wrote, and

Spinoza conceived the greatest thought ever to spring from a human brain (J 293).

In L 195, where he attempts to distill the principle of decent living from parallels in philosophical, religious, humanistic and political precepts, Lichtenberg also deals with the realization "that everything is nothing," an insight which in his view can only be understood properly when it has resulted from the most intense mental effort. Among those who meet this criterion is Kreuzgang, from whose mind thoughts on the finality and vanity of human life are never far removed.

In a passage where "madhouse" is equally emblematic for the individual, the nation, the earth or the universe, and the storm corresponds to any physical or mental disturbance, Kreuzgang looks out into a bleak cosmic void:

The storm raged wildly about the madhouse.- I lay against the bars and looked into the night, beyond which there was nothing further to be seen in heaven and on earth. It was for me as if I were standing close to the Nothing and cried into it, but there was no more sound--I was frightened, for I believed I had really called, but I heard myself only in me.

(p. 213).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Pierre-Simon de Laplace, with whose works Lichtenberg as professor of astronomy was familiar (No. 683) had already anticipated the conception of the black hole, but as he could not verify it by experiments, his thoughts were considered up to very recently as suspect speculations and the relevant passages were omitted from later editions. Kreuzgang seems here to confront a similar

An arrowswift flash of lightning illuminates the somber scene briefly, like the span of life set against eternity, and after that Kreuzgang sees himself alone "in the Nothing" (p. 213). Though terrified, he is not overpowered by the reign of darkness, and the integrity of individual life is thus asserted even in the bleakest moments.

A dream sequence which follows provides negative proof of Locke's theory about the external "great source of most of the ideas we have." These, according to Locke, depend wholly upon our senses.⁴⁶ Deprived of vision, Kreuzgang finds himself in the total dark completely dependent on his own inner resources, and has to acknowledge them as quite inadequate in accordance with Locke's conclusion:

phenomenon. See also Ecc. XII, 3, "In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and those that look out of the windows be darkened."

⁴⁶ John Locke. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. (1690), Book II, Chapt. I, "Of Ideas in General, and their Original," Sec. 3: "The Objects of Sensation." This was not in Lichtenberg's library, but he shows his familiarity with Locke's theories in Book E and F, especially in connection with his work with David Hartley's philosophy, whom Priestley praised as having surpassed Locke (E 453). F 11 reviews a discussion in the Göttingische Gelehrte Zeitung (1776) in which Priestley is accused of having misunderstood Locke. Lichtenberg deals with the formation of concepts, and how far the soul can reflect itself without external input. This is the very question which Kreuzgang tries to fathom as he stares out of the window.

if there be nothing but the strength of our persuasions, whereby to judge of our persuasions: if reason must not examine their truth by something extrinsical to the persuasions themselves, inspirations and delusions, truth and falsehood, will have the same measure, and will not be possible to be distinguished.⁴⁷

All Kreuzgang can do is to accept the maxim which Locke has underlined in the same paragraph: "Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything." Throughout his nightwatches, Kreuzgang's actions and reactions confirm this guideline, which was already established by Socrates. How far this human reason will stretch and whether it can be trusted are Kreuzgang's questions. He pursues them with a fervent persistence that transposes Fieldings' realistic problems--how people should coexist most harmoniously and rewardingly--to an intense level of intellectual inquiry.

Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" not only stimulated the English empiricists of the eighteenth century and provided the basis for the theories of Hartley and a challenge for Kant, it also influenced the literature of the period, including Fielding. A Lockean reference in one of his authorial asides illuminates a stage metaphor:

Thus the hero is always introduced with a flourish of drums and trumpets, in order to

⁴⁷ Locke, IV, xix, Sec. 14.

rouse a martial spirit in the audience and to accommodate their ears to bombast and fustian, which Mr. Locke's blind man would not have grossly erred in likening to the sound of a trumpet.⁴⁸

As the nearest approach to a mind unfurnished with external objects, a person born blind could serve to verify Locke's theories, and throughout the enlightenment keen interest was therefore focused on the reactions and behaviour of such unfortunates.⁴⁹ Bonaventura's many allusions to blindness should be interpreted as commentaries upon empirical philosophy from Locke to Kant. Bonaventura frequently alludes to Oedipus, which was quite common during the enlightenment, and occurs also in Fielding, where, for instance, "part of the Man of the Hill's tale is Oedipus Rex in reverse."⁵⁰

Counter-balancing the tragedy of blindness and suffering in Lichtenberg and Bonaventura is Harlequin, the clown from the commedia dell' arte who plays a prominent part in Fielding's farces. These

⁴⁸ Tom Jones, IV. i.

⁴⁹ e.g. George Berkely, Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709), esp. Sec. 41, and A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge (1710), Sec. 43, ". . . a man born blind and afterwards made to see, would not, at first sight think the things he saw to be without his mind, or at any distance from him."

⁵⁰ Andrew Wright, Henry Fielding Mask and Feast (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 88.

were too closely connected to topics of the moment to arouse much interest abroad. Lichtenberg knew them, however, and quoted them, as in his brief, allusive note "The tragic Harlequin" [Der tragische Hanswurst] (F 1177). The connection to Fielding and his Pasquin is drawn by F 1165 which links the formulation "Zimmermann der Grosse" expressively with Tom Thumb the Great, and thus shows that Lichtenberg had Fielding's satiric metaphors in mind at the time.

The line in Pasquin to which "der tragische Hanswurst" refers is in the Prologue which promises that Harlequin will "storm in tragic rage." This unusual blend of farce and tragedy in a prologue is repeated in the "Clown's Prologue to the Tragedy:Man," which forms the actual and structural center of the Nightwatches (p. 137). Fielding's use of the term Harlequin provides a link with the world of the commedia dell'arte. This is emphasized in a contemporary cartoon, now in the British museum, where the cast of Pasquin appears in the traditional costumes of this genre. In the Ticket for the Author's Benefit similar figures are shown, a further sign that Fielding's farce was interpreted as part of the commedia dell'arte tradition.⁵¹

⁵¹ Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Vol. XI, The Pasquin Cartoon, p. 164, Ticket to the Author's Benefit, p. 192; p. 203.

Fielding's favorite structure for his farces was the "Rehearsal Play," in which audience participation is maximised, and the viewers are never allowed to forget that what happens is only a stage production. This Verfremdungseffekt⁵² deprives the action of immediacy and turns it from an appeal to the senses into one to the intellect. In his introduction to The Author's Farce, Charles B. Wood shows that this "'emblematical' method (to borrow a term from the critic Sneerwell in Pasquin) is likely to give characters and plot an allegorical significance and often does not pretend to represent surface appearances of life as we know it. At times, however, what may be called non-realistic elements are juxtaposed or mingled with realistic elements in such a way that a peculiar satiric effect is gained."⁵³

Kreuzgang uses similar Verfremdungseffekte when he draws the reader's attention to his own efforts

⁵² Brecht's expression is here used in agreement with Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Some Reflections on Satire," in ed. Ronald Paulson, Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 362. "The best account of satiric intent has been supplied by a theorist who did not propose to describe satiric effects at all. Bertold Brecht's account of the purpose of his "epic theatre" is suggestive about the purposes of the satire."

⁵³ Henry Fielding, The Author's Farce. Ed. Charles B. Woods. Regents Restoration Drama (University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. xvi.

and skills in being able to write in different styles (p. 85). Fielding's authorial voice also delights in these literary accomplishments. In Hatfield's judgment

the intrusive commentary, the digressions, the chats with hypothetical readers, the self-conscious theoretical flourishes, and other mannerisms are not just comic tricks at the expense of the narrative tradition. They are the "Art and Pains" required to set the author's mind "at a Distance and make it its own Object." They are a "Mirror for the Understanding" in which the thinking mind that assumes responsibility for the artifice and the rhetoric as well as for the ethical norms of the narrative is itself made an objective image, a sharper and more compelling image, often, than any of the characters of the fictional worlds for which he is the agency because he is closer to the reality which we ourselves inhabit.⁵⁴

This description of Fielding's innovative authorial techniques applies in like measure to the nightwatchman. Similarly F. Homes Dudden describes Fielding's narrator in ways directly applicable to the Nightwatches. He assumes at will

the role of interpreter, commentator, and critic. It was his habit to break off his narrative at frequent intervals, that he might come forward . . . and chat, as it were familiarly and confidentially with his readers. His communications were of various kinds. Sometimes he would explain details in the related history, . . . sometimes he would comment on the characters and their actions; sometimes he would expatiate on the theory of his art, or on some problem of life and conduct."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Hatfield, p. 208.

⁵⁵ Dudden, p. 1104.

Alter's summary of Fielding's art and artifice also speaks equally for Bonaventura's literary methods:

Fielding, like the best allusive poetry of Dryden and Pope, invokes--in a sense, recapitulates--a whole spectrum of European civilization from Homer and Horace to the French neoclassicists and the eighteenth-century English essayists.⁵⁶

When Price discusses the considerable influence of Fielding on the German novel, he concludes that German critics failed to appreciate the fundamental difference between Richardson and Fielding, and that "ready enough to imitate other authors, the Germans have been unable to vie with Fielding."⁵⁷ Bonaventura may be regarded as an exception, for he understood and employed Fielding's literary techniques, though his *menippea* compresses the satiric critique of human follies into allegory, where Fielding relies largely on realistic and representational, and therefore much more expansive, exemplification. Fielding works in allegorical and moral dimensions, while Bonaventura proceeds to anagogy, the highest level of literature,

⁵⁶ Robert Alter, Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 189. For Lichtenberg's interest in Dryden see Bibliotheca Lichtenbergiana, No. 1642, an unidentifiable edition of John Dryden, Alexander's Feast.

⁵⁷ Price, English Literature in Germany, Chapter XIV, "Fielding and the Realistic Novel," p. 182.

which requires mystical and spiritual interpretation, and thus in itself epitomizes the ultimate duality of all human endeavour.

Paulson notes "a relentlessly humanizing tendency in irony from Swift onwards and a move towards character from the abstract idea."⁵⁸ This trend is strongly expressed in Fielding's approach to satire, but it is reversed by Bonaventura and his predilection for pure reason. At the same time Bonaventura advances from Fielding's techniques to those of Sterne, of whom Watt states

Sterne, like Fielding, was a scholar and a wit, and he was equally anxious to have full freedom to comment on the action of his novel or indeed on anything else. But whereas Fielding had gained this freedom only by impairing the verisimilitude of his narrative, Sterne was able to achieve exactly the same ends without any such sacrifice by the simple but ingenious expedient of locating his reflections in the mind of his hero--the most recondite allusion could thus be laid at the door of the notorious inconsequences of the process of the association of ideas.⁵⁹

This was also the stance adopted by Bonaventura, in whose text Locke's and Hartley's association of ideas, to which Lichtenberg was so committed, is orchestrated with intellectual virtuosity.

⁵⁸ Ronald Paulson, Fielding: a Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), Introduction, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 293.

CHAPTER IX

LAURENCE STERNE (1713-68) AND KREUZGANG'S LIFE AND OPINIONS.

When Lichtenberg placed Fielding higher than Sterne in his comparison (F 1074) he had their respective didactic purposes in mind, and he took into consideration that Fielding's forgiveness of human failings is always based on the merit of the individual case, while Sterne's good natured humor often evades real evil; his delight in the ludicrous at times takes precedent over moral evaluation.

Lichtenberg, who followed the traces of his literary heroes while in England, visited the grave of Sterne.¹ There he found neither the tombstone nor the epitaph--both supplied by two freemasons from their private means--adequate to honor the great author. Admiration for his works had, however, not blinded him to the shortcomings of Sterne the man. Of these he must have heard from many who experienced

¹ Promies, Vol. IV, p. 232. The visit is mentioned in a letter to Dieterich dated March 15, 1775, as having taken place on the previous day, and also in a letter to Professor Christian Gottlob Heyne, which was started on March 6th, but written in stages over a period of time.

them at first hand, for he frequented the same circles in which the Prebendary from York had been made welcome not all that many years previously.

In G 2 Lichtenberg warns his German compatriots who were moved to tears by Sterne's exquisite sentiments that Yorick, the authorial voice of the Sentimental Journey, was not the same as Sterne, whom he calls a

creeping parasite, a flatterer of the great, and an insufferable leech to those with whom he decided to dine. He arrived without being invited for breakfast, and when his host went out on a visit to get rid of him, he came along unbidden, for he refused to imagine that he could be unwelcome anywhere. On returning home he came along again, and finally sat down to dinner, monopolizing the conversation and talking all the time about himself".

Thus G 2 insists on the importance "for the understanding of Augustan [English eighteenth-century] prose satire . . . that a distinction be maintained between the author and his ironic persona."² This prerequisite is taken into account in all of Lichtenberg's own satires and applies also to Kreuzgang, who should not be regarded as a straight projection of his author.

Lichtenberg hints in G 2 at many unworthy intrigues which Sterne conducted, but to tell of

² Melvyn New, Laurence Sterne as Satirist. A Reading of Tristram Shandy (Gainesville:University of Florida Press, 1969), p. 60.

them, he says, would earn him accusations of planting nettles on the grave of him, who so lovingly removed them from the grave of Lorenzo. Lichtenberg warns, however, that Sterne would not have paused to take the time for this pious service to the dead, had a dinner invitation from a Duke awaited his attention, or had pulling nettles from a grave not sounded so particularly spiritual. In the same passage Lichtenberg calls Sterne an unsurpassably pleasing prattler and painter of feelings. The casual reference to Lorenzo's grave shows how well known Yoricks exploits had become in Germany.³

When Tristram Shandy took London by storm in 1760 there was little reaction in Germany, where the situations and allusions were too alien to stir up much interest. The many digressions were little understood and further alienated readers. Sterne's extraordinary popularity in Germany began only when his Sentimental Journey appeared in 1768. It was instantly and ably translated by J. J. Bode, who was helped and inspired by Ebert, and also by Lessing, who suggested "empfindsam" as an apt rendering of

³ Laurence Sterne. A Sentimental Journey. Vol. I. "The Snuff-Box. Calais." Price, English Literature in Germany, gives some instances of the impact this incident had in Germany, where even "Lorenzo Dosen," little horn boxes, were manufactured.

"sentimental."⁴ This translation appeared already in 1768, followed by a second edition and another translation in the next year. Fortified by the success and by Lessing, Bode later translated Tom Jones in six volumes (1786-88), retaining most of the original, while in most translations a great deal, especially of the authorial voice, was cut out.⁵

The enthusiastic reception of the Sentimental Journey encouraged Bode to translate Tristram Shandy as well, and the list of his subscribers contained the leading literary names in Germany, including Goethe, Herder, Klopstock and Wieland.⁶

No copy of Tristram Shandy was in Lichtenberg's library, but his references to names and situations from the work in his notes and letters testifies to his thorough familiarity with the Shandean world.⁷ He owned the Sentimental Journey in a London edition of 1768, The Sermons of Mr. Yorick, London 1768, 4 vols., and Letters to his most intimate friends. A Fragment in the Manner of Rablais. To which are added prefix'd Memoirs of his Life and Family written by

⁴ Price, English Literature in Germany, Chapt. XV, "Sterne and the Sentimental Novel," p. 193.

⁵ Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, p. 190.

⁶ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 194.

⁷ E.g. Promies, Vol. IV, p. 340. Letter to Karl Friedrich Hindenburg of August 24, 1778.

himself and published by his daughter, Mrs. Medalle. London 1775, 3 vols. (Nos. 1670-72). An entry at the beginning of Wastebook B testifies that Lichtenberg had also read Yoricks Sentimental Journey in the translation of Bode, and corrected by Lessing.⁸

Sterne's whimsical humour and goodnatured tolerance of human failings became immensely fashionable. Empfindsamkeit, his supposed brand of sentimentality, turned into a password for a literary epoch and, as Price puts it, "the 'Emfindsamen' worshipped at Sterne's feet."⁹ It was against this indiscriminate adoration that Lichtenberg directed his complaint: "Sternean simplicity of manners, his warm and feeling heart, his soul in sympathy with everything noble and good, all the other cliches, and the sigh alas poor Yorick! which says everything and nothing, have now become catchwords with us" (G 2).

What he himself admired was Sterne the satirist, whose knowledge of the human mind enabled him to reveal character traits through the most trivial incidents, and whose ability to connect quite different matters was in line with Locke's theory of associations.

⁸ Leitzmann, Vol. 123, p. 196.

⁹ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 195.

The concepts which Locke had formulated had been elaborated by David Hartley (1705-57). While Shaftesbury and his school considered human morality as an innate quality, Hartley, in his Observations on Man, his Fame, his Duty, and his Expectations (1749), regards it as a trait that develops from association of ideas. Not inborn goodness, but the ability to combine thoughts and to look at events from differing perspectives is therefore seen as the quality which distinguishes man from the rest of creation, and at the same time gives him the only opportunity which exists on earth to transcend immediate reality. Hartley's ideas were supported by his experience as physician, and complemented with his theory of vibrations.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) was so impressed by these arguments that he reissued Hartley's work with an introduction by himself, in which he stressed the indebtedness to Locke and pointed out that "what we call new thoughts are only new combinations of old simple ideas or decompositions of complex ones." He insisted that

simplicity in causes, and variety in effects, which we discover in every other part of nature: all our intellectual pleasures and pains, all the phenomena of memory, imagination, volition, reasoning, and every other mental affectation

and operation, are only different modes, or cases of the association of ideas."¹⁰

Some have claimed that Sterne's mode of writing satirizes, yet also illustrates this point of view to perfection.

Lichtenberg's initial interest in Hartley was stimulated by his friendship with Priestley,¹¹ but he was soon contemplating, discussing and disseminating Hartley's ideas on his own, as he found them so congenial. He had already praised "Yorick" in KA 272 for his gift of connecting distant things, and Sterne's brilliance in allusions and associations was a talent which in Lichtenberg's estimation amounted to genius. When therefore some of Sterne's posthumous notes were criticized as trivial, Lichtenberg defended their value by pointing out that their meaning depended on the context, and he compared Sterne's collection of trifles to a painter's careful preparation of his colours (L 186). The analogy emphasizes Lichtenberg's conviction that Sterne's seemingly intuitive and spontaneous whimsies

¹⁰ Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, pp. xxvi and xxiv.

¹¹ Promies, Vol. IV, pp. 236 and 253, where Priestley's introduction to Hartley's Theory of the human mind is discussed. Priestley expects that the individual will cease to exist after death. See also E 453 for Priestley and Hartley.

were meticulously prepared and carefully planned. That this procedure applied equally to Lichtenberg's own working methods, was already recognized in 1886 by Richard M. Meyer, who sees in Lichtenberg the most eager apostle of the English way of thinking in Göttingen, and insists that his conception of Sterne's true merits was clearer than that of most of his contemporaries.¹² The reason for this Meyer sees in Lichtenberg's method of arriving at conclusions not in a direct way, but circumspectly and by induction, based on acute observation of facts, especially of the sort which most other people regard as insignificant.

Study of human trivia as key to the real motivation and mechanism of the human mind was an approach to character interpretation which Lichtenberg shared with Sterne, or to phrase it in more modern terms, both writers regarded the unconscious or subconscious as the best indication of truth. Like Sterne, Lichtenberg liked to look behind the scenes, for he knew how easily appearances could be arranged for effect, while the trivialities which normally pass unnoticed reveal the true nature behind the mask of affectation. Lichtenberg despaired about Yorick's enthusiastic admirers because of their

¹² Richard M. Meyer, pp. 75, 60, and 71.

indiscriminating imitations and their failure to grasp Sterne's complexity. He censured their zeal--which all too often degenerated into mere absurdities--with metaphors similar to those which characterize the unsuccessful poet in the Nightwatches, who hides his own insignificance under the cast-off outer garments of the great and demonstrates thereby that he aspires to their eminence in appearance only, while ignoring completely the challenge of their genius (pp. 179 and 181).

As Lichtenberg was constantly warning against writing from second hand experience, he admired Sterne's intimate knowledge of human motivations, as well as the intellectual dexterity with which he could manipulate reader reactions (F 1107), and the apparent ease with which he presented his ideas. What others regarded as inspired whims, Lichtenberg appreciated as the result of a painstaking process of perfecting an idea, for he believed that Sterne must have polished his witty remarks for weeks, before they acquired the impromptu impact of a sudden flash of lightning (F 750).

Note F 750 is especially illuminating in this regard as Lichtenberg himself was a master of such seemingly spontaneous wit, and he himself perfected

his proficiency by diligent study of other experts in the field. How he analyzed their example and profited by it is shown in C 47 where Sterne's apostrophes are appraised as a deliberate technique which adds zest to an argument. A suggestion is added how Lichtenberg might himself use that approach to advantage.

Lichtenberg's first satiric fragment, "Lorenz Eschenheimers empfindsame Reise nach Laputa" already shows a blending of Swift's manner with Sternean traits. While his contemporaries in Germany were inspired by Sterne's oddness, his delight in the ridiculous, his goodnatured compliance with human weakness and above all his erratic rambles, which were all taken as a celebration of individuality and an assertion of artistic freedom, Lichtenberg admired Sterne's art for the purpose and structure which it concealed, for its serious implications, and for the virtuosity with which trivialities or sexual innuendo were manipulated to serve the satiric intention.

Bonaventura has taken from Sterne much of what Lichtenberg did. The method en Ziczac, already praised in B 131, was chosen by Bonaventura as the structural principle of his text; and as Jeffrey L. Sammons has shown, the seeming incoherence of the Nightwatches conceals the highly disciplined and

sophisticated planning which is also apparent behind Sterne's digressive excursions. While Sterne and Bonaventura both digress with great calculation, the Nightwatches practice economy of means where Sterne allows himself to become expansive.

Affinities between Tristram Shandy and the Nightwatches have already been examined by Rosemarie Hunter, who notes that "both novels have been described as fictional biographies," and "both have anti-heroes rather than heroes." Kreuzgang "tells his life and opinions, with a heavy stress on the opinions. There are digressions, insertions, flashbacks. A wide panorama of man's foibles, hypocrisy, and narrow-mindedness is painted with a wealth of detail-interwoven with fragments of the biographical story."¹³

Like Tristram Shandy, Kreuzgang is not revealing his history within a linear time frame or in consecutive narration. His narration is also governed by Sterne's blissful disregard of chronological order, for he, too, is not interested in events, but in human reactions to them, though these are predominantly emotional in Sterne and intellectual for Kreuzgang.

¹³ Hunter, "Nachtwachen von Bonaventura," p. 220.

Both authors follow the serio-comic requirements of the menippea and draw deliberate attention to their genre by, among other devices, repeated mention of tragi-comedies. Sterne accomplishes this in his Sentimental Journey by the seemingly gratuitous information that his hero attended the opera comique in Paris. Importance is given to this signifier by reiteration,¹⁴ a method which is repeatedly used in the Nightwatches.

Insistence on genre and careful adherence to its demands is a mark of the eighteenth-century writer. Satire as a genre has to be inconclusive, for its aim is to withhold the answers in order to stimulate the reader into working out solutions for himself. This is not always recognized; loose ends--especially in the menippea which can so closely resemble the novel --are therefore often considered a weakness. Hence Frye remarks: "An extraordinary number of great satires are fragmentary, unfinished, or anonymous."¹⁵

Bonaventura parallels Sterne in other ways. His use of the Clown to speak the prologue of a tragedy recalls Sterne's inclusion of a sermon in Tristram Shandy, and more daring still, the publication of his

¹⁴ Laurence Sterne. A Sentimental Journey. Book II, "The Passport. The Hotel at Paris," and "The Act of Charity. Paris."

¹⁵ Frye, p. 234.

sermons under the pseudonym Yorick. Though the name also stands for York, the city with which Sterne identified himself, he himself suggests the connection with the jester in Hamlet in Chapter XI of Book I.

Predictably Sterne was strongly attacked for allocating the authorial voice of his sermons to a court jester. The Monthly Review proclaimed it as "the greatest outrage against Sense and Decency, that has been offered since the first establishment of Christianity." It asked indignantly: "Would any man believe that a Preacher was in earnest, who should mount the pulpit in a Harlequin's coat?"¹⁶ The public became, however, reconciled to Sterne's innovative authorial voice, and Bonaventura adapted it to his own purposes when he used the Clown as herald for a tragedy.

Echoes from Yorick's Sermons are faintly discernible in the Nightwatches. One of them fills in the background to Kreuzgang's "funeral oration . . . when a little boy was born," (p. 113) for it deals with Eccl., VII, 2-3: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."¹⁷

¹⁶ Laurence Sterne, The Sermons of Mr. Yorick. Intr. Wilbur L. Cross (New York: J. F. Taylor & Co., 1904), I, pp. xxix-xxx.

¹⁷ Sterne, Sermons, Vol. I, Sermon II, pp. 19-33.

Wilbur L. Cross says about this sermon: "a beautiful allegorical veil hangs over the drama, under which we pass through scenes alternating with joy and sorrow, depicted with perfect art. This dramatic discourse is Sterne's most complete allegory of human life."¹⁸

Another of Sterne's sermons takes as its text Genesis I, 15 and is called "Joseph's History Considered--Forgiveness of Injuries."¹⁹ Sterne dwells on Joseph's nature as being fundamentally different from that of his brothers, for he was kind, loving, and concerned for all of them, while they were selfish, mean and narrow-minded. Sterne's vivid interpretation of the biblical text illuminates the metaphoric use of Joseph in the Tenth Nightwatch (p. 161).

The Sermons deal, however, on the whole with themes and queries common to their times; their subject matter provides, therefore, only a general indication of Bonaventura's focus. A more revealing similarity between Sterne and Bonaventura is found in their references to Hamlet. Sterne uses Shakespeare's tragedy as a backdrop against which he projects and tests his heroes. For this effect he

¹⁸ Wilbur L. Cross, The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne. New enlarged ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), Vol. I, p. 228.

¹⁹ Sermons, Vol. I, Sermon XII, pp. 193-210.

does not just rely on Yorick, but introduces constant allusions and references, so that, as in the Nightwatches, the reader is repeatedly reminded to maintain a double focus, and to interpret the text with Shakespeare's tragedy in mind.

A further reference to Sterne in the Nightwatches is the description of the dehumanised judge writing death warrants, "buried in piles of documents, like a Laplander interred alive" (p. 51). Bonaventura does not pause to refer his readers to "The Author's Preface" in Tristram Shandy, where Tristram talks of North Lapland,

where the whole province of a man's concerns lies for near nine month together within the narrow compass of his cave,--where the spirits are compressed almost to nothing,--and where the passions of a man, with everything which belongs to them, are as frigid as the zone itself;--there the least quantity of judgment imaginable does the business,--and of wit--there is a total and an absolute saving,--for as not one spark is wanted,--so not one spark is given.

Bonaventura compresses the whole passage, into the short simile of "a Laplander interred alive" (p. 51). Baffling until the connotation is understood, the description surprises by its precision, and displays at the same time Bonaventura's short-hand method of allusion, his erudition and his amazing recall of literary detail.

The Preface to Tristram Shandy is particularly celebrated because it is placed into Chapter XX of

Book III. By this unusual device Sterne not only ridicules the custom of writing empty prefaces, but also indicates his intention to have his own preface read and generally discussed. In this belated introduction he explains his own contribution to the theory of association with the characteristic nonchalance with which he habitually presents important problems in frivolous guise. Reviewing the implications of wit and judgment, he calls upon a variety of witnesses that equals--and burlesques--Burton's method of establishing himself as an unbiased reporter by attributing all his information to others. Mixing fact and invention with Swiftian ease, Sterne declares:

wit and judgment in this world never go together; inasmuch as they are two operations differing from each other as wide as east is from west.--So says Locke;--so are farting and hiccuping, say I. But in answer to this, Didius, the great church lawyer, in his code de fartandi et illustrandi fallaciis, doth maintain and make fully appear, That an illustration is no argument,--nor do I maintain the wiping of a looking glass clean to be a syllogism.

Lichtenberg poured over these pages. In Timorus Conrad Photorin quotes the last part of the passage, either from memory or with the subtle intention to adapt it more closely to the context of book-learning in which Conrad's pretensions flourish, for it appears as Brillenwischen ist noch kein Syllogismus--

to wipe spectacles clean does not amount to syllogism.²⁰

Photorin quotes Latin and Greek authorities in the same sentence together with Sterne, whom he latinises into a Präbendarius Sterne and calls a Scandalum ecclesiae, while dismissing his opinions as fool's talk (Possen). This criticism of an author whom he highly valued shows clearly that Photorin is a satiric mouthpiece with whom Lichtenberg did not expect to be identified. Instead Photorin personifies

the rhetorical trope of irony, which at one time referred almost solely to the 'blame-by-praise' figure, [and] had come to define for the Augustan satirists the fundamental organizing principle of their work--an ironic persona whose intensely serious engagement in the bathetic, the trivial, and the absurd was the starting point of an attack on human folly and perversity."

Melvyn New argues that this "rhetoric of mock-encomium" pervades Tristram Shandy.²¹ It is also a device by which Kreuzgang apportions blame, thereby forcing the reader constantly to assess whether the nightwatchman is using his sober judgement or the rhetoric of satiric inversion.

While Conrad Photorin is cast in the mold of Martinus Scriblerus--the learned, narrow-minded,

²⁰ Promies, Vol. III, p. 226.

²¹ New, p. 64.

self-satisfied pedant--Yorick, Tristram Shandy, and Kreuzgang establish a separate pattern. In their different ways all three aspire to a generality which offers the reader possibilities for identification, and by this method the impact of their often unexpectedly acerbic irony is sharpened. Where they ridicule man's follies--as opposed to castigating particular misuses in certain fields such as law, medicine, or theology--they therefore direct the satire also against themselves. A good example of this is in Tristram Shandy, V. xv., which begins:

Had this volume been a farce, which, unless every one's life and opinions are to be looked upon as a farce as well as mine, I see no reason to suppose--the last chapter, Sir, must have set off thus.

Pt.r..r..ing--twing--twang--prut--trut---'tis a cursed bad fiddle.

Melvyn New's satiric reading of the text shows that "Tristram's play on the word 'farce' provides both an ironic selfappraisal of his efforts thus far and the signal which sets him fiddling."²² In the midst of further onomatopetic incoherence, Sterne introduces, as if casually, the word "nothing," one of his recurring leitmotifs which appears in ever changing context. He declares "there is nothing in playing before good judges." He also weaves elliptic phrases into his description of playing on a violin

²² New, p. 160.

which is out of tune, "wickedly strung." These indicate that a "grave man in black" is silently watching.

The man in black, enigmatic as in Goldsmith's The Citizen of the World and in the Nightwatches, gives a serious undertone to the menippea. The serio-comic polarity is further emphasized by the extreme contrasts with which Tristram enlivens his speech:

I had rather play a Capriccio to Calliope herself than draw my bow across my fiddle before that very man; . . . I'll stake my Cremona to a Jew's trump, which is the greatest musical odds that ever were laid, that I will this moment stop three hundred and fifty leagues out of tune upon my fiddle, without punishing one single nerve that belongs to him.

While the man in black himself remains a shadow figure, such hyperbole defines him as somebody quite out of this world--death or devil--and thus establishes the uneasy feeling that, while life may be a farce it will nevertheless inevitably end in tragedy and death.

Anticipating the Nightwatches, Sterne uses literary criticism and similes from music to explain general truths. Music played on an instrument that is out of tune thus is turned into a metaphor for the cacophony of life. The dichotomy between the ideal, which can be imagined but not realized, and the pitiful reality is already inherent in Shandy's

fiddling. Bonaventura only elaborates and up-dates the image when he repeatedly presents the out-of-tune "Mozart symphony executed by bad village musicians" (p. 75). Kreuzgang uses Sterne's imagery even more directly when he compares his heart to "a string instrument absurdly tuned on purpose, on which therefore nothing can ever be played in a pure key, unless it be that the devil might once advertise a concert on it." (p. 167)

Tristram's self-ironizing remarks on farce while he fiddles and "the grave man in black" silently watches are among the signs which Melvyn New has noted of "death's growing dominance in Tristram's study throughout Volumes V and VI." Consequently, when in Volume VII, Chapter I, Death himself knocked at Tristram's door, it is but a "logical and dramatic consequence of Tristram's previous activity."²³

The implied presence of death, and the ultimate questions about the value and aim of life which are thereby posed are the theme which unifies the digressive texts of Sterne, as well as the Nightwatches. Melvyn New connects Sterne with "the 'dance of death' tradition in having Death lead Tristram (or, more accurately, pursue him) across the length of France to a final dance with Nannette in

²³ New, p. 173.

the last chapter." Though New makes it clear that "the danse macabre is not essentially a satiric tradition," he shows that through "the close relationship between sermon and satire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries . . . it passed freely from one to the other and became one of the satirist's methods to remind his reader of the ubiquity of death, the ultimate last journey to the grave."²⁴

Tristram flies from Death with precipitate haste, though he knows that there is no escape for him, and that the outcome must be the same as in the traditional Dance of Death where resignation reigns from the start. But to him the essence of life is, as for Kreuzgang, self-assertion, and resistance against Dulness, mediocrity and defeat, and so he flees even though there is no geographical point which can offer him a sanctuary. His journey can therefore never be completed.

Less spectacular is the nightwatchman's retreat from death. He takes an inward turn, and withdraws from the world, becoming more and more alienated. The point of refuge from which he might hope to defy the invisible threat is his inner self, and he is therefore searching for his identity. Conforming with

²⁴ New, p. 173.

enlightened aims he does this not as an individual but as a representative of mankind, for the correlation between life and eternity was to the age a general and not a personal challenge.

The invisible presence of Death in the Nightwatches is established from the first page, when the stillness in the dark streets is described as "dead silence" (p. 29). Such colloquialisms are frequently employed in the manner of Sterne who introduces them as if they were merely casual embellishments. While on the surface they add lively immediacy to his language, they constantly keep the image of death visible in the background. "The wind chopped about: s'Death!-" (VII. ii.). "A clatter in the house shall wake the dead" (VII. xi.). "The devil it is! said I" (VII. xxxiv.).

Such expressions jolt the memory, and with their ungentlemanly crudity they form an intermediary link between the escatological allegory of the travelogue in Book VII and the bawdy aspects, which are provided by Tristram's lively interest in wordly pleasures. This polarity pervades every incident, however trifling, and infuses the apparently capricious humor with dark and unexpected dimensions.

Bonaventura uses the same pattern. Beside idiomatic phrases concerning death, those of related

subjects like devil and grave are also freely introduced, even in such seemingly neutral asides as the aphorism "Sobriety is the tomb of art!" (p. 187). As in Sterne they keep the ultimate questions concerning death, dying and the possibilities afterwards in the mind, and provide a somber counterpoint to the farcical situations of life.

The people whom Kreuzgang meets on his nightly rounds are like the figures in the Dance of Death, not individuals but prototypes of human experience. As Kreuzgang sees himself as representative of humanity, (der ich Mensch heisse, p. 167), the people he encounters are mostly projections of his own personality, and many of them are pursued or overtaken by death while he wakes and watches. The detached fascination with which he observes and analyses their end is only possible because he experiences each death not as an individual calamity, but as a central part of the "Tragedy: Man" in which he himself has been allocated a part.

The poet in the garret is an embodiment of his own former aspiration--"I was once of your kind" (p. 31). The freethinker foreshadows his own death, and a sequel to life on earth which can be anticipated mystically, but not rationally (p. 31-37). Self-identification even includes the mysterious "tall

manly figure, wrapped in a cloak" (p. 67) that "man on the grave" (p. 69) whose suicide attempts prove futile, for Kreuzgang reports of himself a similar incident, although it happened in a dream: "Beyond myself, I tried to annihilate myself--but I remained and felt myself immortal! . . . " (p. 215).

All these men lack a proper name. They are not characters but rather the types we expect in menippean satire as defined by Northrop Frye's theory of genres:

The Menippean satire deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes. Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behavior. The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent.²⁵

As in the Dance of Death, individuality is merged into the common fate, but the Nightwatches stress the contradictions in human nature through these odd and sometimes bizarre types of its characters. Sterne uses similar ploys to expose dark reality behind a confused and incoherent surface.

Bonaventura's satire is more precise and therefore more bitter than Sterne's, and his

²⁵ Frye, p. 309.

paradigms are more poignant and despairing. This is especially obvious in the female characters. There is no room in the semi-darkness of Kreuzgang's storm riven rounds for light-hearted banter and fleeting flirtations, or for the conventional pleasantries exchanged with chambermaids. Nor is there time to imply and gradually insinuate the idea of a Dance of Death. The theme is directly introduced in the Tenth Nightwatch, a chapter filled with confrontations with death, where skaters are described as "dancing the Basel dance of death to this funeral music" (p. 159). Then--as if in confirmation of Locke and Kant and their claim that the human mind cannot conceive of anything of which it lacks experience--at the end of the final night, Kreuzgang speculates

no doubt countless stars are sparkling and swimming there above us in heaven's ocean, but if they have worlds, as many clever heads assert, then there are also skulls on them and worms, as here below; and that holds throughout the whole immensity, and the Basel dance of death merely grows all the merrier and wilder thereby and the ballroom grander. (p. 245)

The Death of Basel, the famous Tod von Basel, was one of the great sights of this important town and a potent attraction, especially to Englishmen on the Grand Tour, who visited it in great numbers.²⁶

²⁶ Paul-Henry Boerlin, *Der Basler Prediger-Totentanz*, in Unsere Kunstdenkmäler, Mitteilungsblatt der Gesellschaft für schweizerische Kunstgeschichte, XVII, Nr. 4, Basel, 1966, pp. 128-140.

Many of them also stopped and studied in Göttingen, and related their experiences there. Prints and copies of this large fresco enjoyed a brisk sale, and ensured it wide publicity. The huge memento mori was painted during the fifteenth century onto the churchyard wall of the Dominican Monastery, presumably just after the devastating outbreak of the Black Death in 1439. In Basel the twenty-four traditional pairs were expanded to thirty-nine, and each was accompanied by two stanzas. In the first, Death announces his victims' occupation and doom, in the last his human partners reply that they have no choice but to comply with his commands. There is no dramatic struggle, and neither fear nor terror, only hopeless resignation.

The Dance is arranged in a procession like a polonaise, and the nightwatchman gives a good impression of it when he compares it with skaters, who "are turning with airy agility on the sheet of ice in the meadow" (p. 159). The "sheet of ice" not only conveys the chill of the entertainment, but also introduces a further metonym for the fragile vulnerability of life.

Not many women appear in the Basel frescoes, for in the emblematic representation they can only typify the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the

vain and, in the person of a rather central abbess, those with a religious calling; while the numerous men impersonate the different professions. The paucity of women, and their generalized and indistinct personalities in the Nightwatches, conforms with this allegorical display of mankind.²⁷

In the Nightwatches the abbess is not even mentioned. But as the authority responsible for the entombing of the beautiful young mother, her presence casts a deathly shadow over the convent scene. In Tristram Shandy the digression concerning the Abbess of Andouilletts (VII, xxi-xxiv.) takes up five chapters of uneven length. One of them comprises only a few lines and these are liberally interspersed with dashes.

The anecdote relates how the abbess and her resourceful novice contrived to pronounce forbidden words, the only ones which are supposed to induce two mules to draw their carriage uphill. They endeavour to preserve their integrity by the simple expedient of saying each of them only half of the wicked words, and thus a meaningless and consequently sinless

²⁷ The Tod von Basel was demolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century when it was found to be in urgent need of costly restoration. The wall was pulled down with great speed to forestall protests, and only a few fragments could be saved. Most of these have by now found their way into the Historisches Museum in Basel.

syllable. That they have literally conformed to the letter, while sinning against the spirit is a transgression which does not worry them. The two nuns are quite oblivious to their sin against the Holy Spirit to which the anecdote draws attention.

The tale has all the smuttiness of a crude joke, which Sterne turns into an elegant entertainment by the erudition of his allusions and insinuations. He also provides a context which elevates the rude prank into a parable not less critical of institutionalized religion than the much more spine-chilling scene which Kreuzgang watches in the convent (p. 165-69). Both incidents are not concerned with individuals and their particular fate, but with mental attitudes. Indicted are not just women, or even religious orders, but the hypocrisy of human nature that conscientiously pursues the letter and offends against the spirit with impunity.

The dashes and dots which Sterne uses so profusely to induce the reader to fill in his own conclusions are very sparingly applied by Bonaventura. Instead he uses the method of Timanthes and leaves a void to set the readers' imagination to work. Lest this be forgotten he reminds them every now and again of his technique. Thus he lets the procession of nuns "and in their midst the walking

bride of death," pass by without horrified outcry, offering only the comment, "the tragic muse, the less hand-wringing she does, the more profoundly she moves us" (p. 167).

The gothic atmosphere of the tomb scene is almost as little accentuated in the Nightwatches as in Tristram Shandy, or in the Sentimental Journey. There, nothing is told of the scenery or the tomb of Father Lorenzo, but that "he was buried, not in his convent, but according to his desire, in a little cemetery, belonging to it, about two leagues off." How forgotten he lies all by himself is only implied by Yorick "plucking up a nettle or two" from his grave. As this act of charity causes him to "burst into a flood of tears," we must conclude that the desolation of the scene is overwhelming (The Snuff Box. Calais).

Sterne mentions the scenery only insofar as it is reflected in Yorick's reaction. He does not stop to exploit the descriptive possibilities of the graveyard. Where he takes note of the environment it is only to illustrate human nature. Thus Father Lorenzo's wish to be buried so far from the monastery projects by topographical means his alienation from the religious order to which he belonged, while the

neglect of his grave reflects in turn the monks' rejection of him.

Where nature is noticed in the Nightwatches, it serves the same parabolic purpose, as in a comparison of the two dissimilar brothers, where scenes from nature are first used as descriptive epithets. Juan "stood all in flames like a volcano," (p. 89) while Ponce "was like a tree which, robbed of its transitory vernal embellishment, stretches its naked branches stiff and bewildered into the breezes" (p. 91). The situation is then summed up:

Thus the same lightning flash ignites a forest for it to illuminate the horizon a thousand nights through, while it travels fleetingly over the heath and singes the meagre flowers for them to wither and leave no trace behind.²⁸

Inherent in these quotations is the theological and mythological background which can provide perspectives into eternity from every point, however randomly selected. Sterne and Bonaventura continually apply this device, often by mere hints

²⁸ The powerful image is not taken from nature directly, but from "Milton's description of the devil and his host of of fallen angels." Milton's passage is highly recommended by Richardson for its "profusion of ornament, particularly in similes, but in each of them there is a great oeconomy shewn [sic] in the language, not a word but is to the purpose." Richardson, Works, p. 133. A similar paraphrase from Paradise Lost was noticed for Tristram Shandy (VI. xxxv.). "STILLNESS, with SILENCE at her back, entered the solitary parlour, and drew their gauzy mantle over my uncle Toby's head." Tristram Shandy, New, The Notes, p. 437, commentary on p. 561, nn. 19-22.

and the lightest of touches which are difficult to detect. At other times they rely on well known mythological implications, such as the lameness, which allegorizes divine punishment for presumption and a fall from heaven, as experienced by Satan and Vulcan. Conversely, lameness is also the hard won mark of divine acceptance for Jacob, who acquired it wrestling with God--a metaphor for persistent pursuit of a worthy aim--and survived, proclaiming: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen., XXXII, 24-30). The episode epitomizes the promise of redemption after perseverance and suffering which Jakob Böhme treats in his exegesis of Genesis, Mysterium Magnum.

Sterne assigns this impediment almost casually to a rustic musician who is playing for the village dance. That it may signify more than a deplorable physical defect can be inferred from the allusion to the gods, contained in his description as one "whom Apollo had recompensed with a pipe" (VII, iviii). The allusion to Pan is reinforced by the alternating metonym "nymphs" for "the rustic daughters of labour" who draw Tristram into their dance. These hints change the rural amusement imperceptibly into a vision of life in Arcadia.

Bonaventura employs an identical technique when Kreuzgang mentions lameness without further explanation, but in the context of classical allusions. The aside may be taken for nothing more than a figure of speech, but it prompts the perceptive reader to consider the possibility of allegorical implications. Reminiscing about the couple planning adultery, the nightwatchman relates:

And it was not long until my Mars crept to his Venus. Since I limped by nature and didn't have the best appearance, I lacked as Vulcan really little more than the golden net. (p. 53)

The physical handicap is not integrated into the story in any realistic way by either Sterne or Bonaventura. In Sterne's situation it connects the scene to Greek mythology, and through it to a vision of perfection which humanity can only imagine. In Kreuzweg's case the impediment is not only a reminder of his godfather, the devil, but also of his nights of wrestling, like Jacob, with the problems of death and eternity.

The enigmatic biblical report of Jacob's encounter with God shows man in a position of near equality to God, and lameness as the mark of courage to have challenged him and forced from him a blessing. The different facets of lameness thus characterize Kreuzgang like the contradictory faces

that stare at him out of the mirror of his imagination (p. 111).

Such devices are intended to activate reader participation, but they also serve the purpose of turning common incidents into parables of general significance. Both were processes in which Lichtenberg delighted, for he strongly believed that "what you find out for yourself leaves a trail in the intellect which can be of further use in different contexts" C 196. To understand, assimilate and explain great thoughts by fitting them into the frame of personal experience is a corner stone of his Gedankensystem, his method of acquiring, arranging, and utilising ideas. He outlined his ideal of empathy between author and reader as early as 1769:

Where people are unable to hear you think, it is necessary to speak, but as soon as you arrive at a point where it is possible to take thoughts for granted which co-incide with our own, one has to stop speaking. Such a book is Sterne's Journey, but most books contain nothing between two memorable points but the most ordinary common sense, a long drawn line where a dotted line would have sufficed. B 86

The nightwatchman likes to lead the reader along just such dotted lines as constitute Lichtenberg's ideal. While he keeps his feelings shrouded to the point of sometimes obscuring them altogether, he does register much more forcibly than Sterne does his

disappointment about the imperfections of life and the gap between imagination and reality.

Between Sterne's goodnatured acceptance of human shortcomings, and the nightwatchman's dark despair about the perverse irrationalities of mankind lies the chasm of the French Revolution. This destroyed with its unexpected atrocities the enlightened belief in progressive perfection, and in the basic benevolence of the human disposition. What appeared as flaws which increased insight, patience and good will might overcome in time were now revealed as cracks under which an unfathomable abyss opened. When, therefore, both authors use similar means for similar ends, they handle them in different ways. Love ending in madness illustrates the point.

In Tristram Shandy this affliction is personified by the forsaken shepherdess Maria in her lyrical rural setting (IX. xxiv.). Melvyn New points to this episode as "intended by Tristram to show his secret springs being touched."²⁹ Tristram demonstrates his capacity for empathy in this interlude in several ways, for on the road towards Maria, he had his "uncle Toby's amours running all the way" in his head, and they affected him as if they had been his own, "so that whether the roads

²⁹ New, p. 193.

were rough or smooth, it made no difference; everything . . . [he] saw or had to do with, touched upon some secret spring either of sentiment or rapture" (IX. xxiv).

The encounter with the shepherdess belongs thematically to Tristram's journey in Book VII, and is part of his unsuccessful flight from death. But Sterne instead inserts it into Volume IX, close to the end. He prefaces the episode with an invocation to the "Gentle Spirit of sweetest humour, who erst didst sit upon the easy pen of my beloved CERVANTES," and proclaims himself unfitted to the task

yet now that I am got to it, anyone is welcome to take my pen, and go on with the story for me that will----I see difficulties of the descriptions I'm going to give----and feel my want of powers.

Kreuzgang protests with similar frustration his lack of skill to describe the full force of human passions and the havoc they create. Sterne's order is inversed, for Kreuzgang offers his remarks only when he has finished his tale of love and death:

What wouldn't I give to be able to narrate with the same nice coherence and directness as other honest Protestant poets and magazine writers, who become great and splendid in so doing and exchange their golden ideas for golden realities. It simply has not been granted to me, and the brief, simple murder story has cost me sweat and toil enough and, none the less, still looks shaggy and motley enough. (p. 97)

There is no reference to Cervantes, but it will be remembered that the location of Kreuzgang's tale is Spain. The elements of Bonaventura's love story are as basic, and therefore as melodramatic, as those of Sterne's famed tale of the girl sitting on a bank and playing woeful tunes on a flute, the haunting image of lost love, reason and hope. Cervantes had already introduced madness and derangement among love-struck shepherds into his Don Quixote to expose as illusory and escapist any hopes that an untainted paradise might be found in the wilderness of nature.³⁰ It is the men who suffer from lovesickness and ensuing madness in his narration. Maria, like Ophelia, shows the female aspects of a derangement which has its origins in the incompatibility of ideal love with the realities of mundane existence.

Though Maria takes up little space in Tristram Shandy, her significance as a focus of love and compassion is considerable. More than anyone else she succeeds in drawing Tristram closer to herself and thus further out of his own isolation. She reappears in the Sentimental Journey, where the

³⁰ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, The Adventures of Don Quixote. First Part, Chapt. XII, "The Goatherd's Story, and Chapt. XIII, "The Conclusion of the Story."

vignette is enlarged into three short chapters which bear her name as title (Vol. II).

The episode inspired much languid imitation in Germany, especially in Darmstadt, Lichtenberg's hometown, where a group of literary enthusiasts wallowed in Empfindsamkeit. They were active mainly between 1770 and 1775. Lichtenberg's contemporary, Johann Heinrich Merck (1741-1791), belonged to this circle. Merck's friend Goethe visited Darmstadt, and found much support there for his early literary efforts.

Central to the circle was Louise von Ziegler, a lady in waiting at the Darmstadt court, who "thought of herself as Maria of Moulins." Caroline von Flachsland also belonged to this group. She was betrothed to Herder and reported to him that Louisa had reconstructed Maria's grave in her garden, and that she was accompanied by a little lamb, which ate and drank with her. The prudent substitution for the emblematically and factually inconvenient goat of a docile and socially much more acceptable lamb is symptomatic of the attitudes exhibited by many of Sterne's most visible German disciples at the time.³¹

³¹ Price, English Literature in Germany, p. 195. See also Fritz Ebner, Musen wohl, doch auch Politik. Lebensbilder aus Darmstadts Vergangenheit. (Darmstadt: Justus von Liebig Verlag, 1982), p. 13-19.

Goethe's admiration for Louisa, whom he addressed in poetry as "Lila," goes far to explain Lichtenberg's acerbic and repeated criticism of the young poet's early works.

The love interest in the Nightwatches has nothing of "Lila's" diffuse sentimentality. Whether in the twice repeated story from Spain, in the invisible suffering of Nos. 12-16 in the asylum, or in Kreuzgang's own "Maytime in the madhouse" (pp. 157, 199-217)--those who pursue the ideal of love come to serious and irreversible grief. The nightwatchman's own love, Ophelia, has Maria's function, and the attributes which both women share with Shakespeare's heroine: a passive non-comprehension of life's cruelties, and an unfulfillable need for wholeness; but Bonaventura's Ophelia is anything but a pattern for a sentimental cult.

Mozart's symphony turns into a travesty when performed by the incompetent. Likewise all the love interests in the Nightwatches are preordained to end in failure and dismay, because the participants themselves are human, and so fall short of the ideal. Like Tristram, Kreuzgang is included in this tragic-comic pattern. Bonaventura adds intensity and Swiftian intellectual despair to Sterne's penetrating

perception, and does not let his dissappointed lovers linger on in pastoral dignity.

The question why perfection is so elusive, and whether it could satisfy man's restless longing even if it were obtainable, exercised many enlightened minds. To Johnson's *Rasselas* the problem is central, for the Abyssinian prince grew up in an enclosure where "all the diversities of the world were brought together; the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded" (Chapt. I). Yet, needless to say, he wanted to escape, "because pleasure has ceased to please," (Chapt. III).

Hogarth had considered the problem from the viewpoint of the painter. When he attempted to create a serene and joyful companion series to the calamitous but hugely successful Marriage à la Mode, not only was there no popular response, he himself lost interest and left the enterprise unfinished.³²

Lichtenberg mentioned this disappointment at the end of his commentaries to the Marriage à la Mode. Characteristically he offered a reason for the failure, and he presented it in the form of a

³² The Happy Marriage series survives only in a number of oil sketches, and engravings after lost paintings, which seem to be quite without a plot. David Bindmann, Hogarth (Norwich: Thames and Hudson, 1981), pp. 115 and 118. See also Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times, Vol. II, pp. 11 and 15.

literary allusion, which is used so frequently in his writings, as in the Nightwatches:

Probably his friends gave him to understand in good time that he was in the same position as his great fellow-countryman Milton; Milton lives, as we know, through his lost, and not through his regained, paradise.³³

In his theoretical treatise, The Analysis of Beauty, Hogarth did not neglect the phenomenon. He wrote:

It is strange that nature hath afforded us so many lines and shapes to indicate the deficiencies and blemishes of the mind, while there are none at all that point out the perfections of it beyond the appearance of common sense and placidity.³⁴

Neither did Sterne miss the paradox, though he touches on it but lightly in his amiable way, choosing as his simile the fruitful abundance and undisturbed tranquillity of a verdant plain, and presenting it in terms of literary criticism, that device so favoured by the English satirists of the eighteenth century:

There is nothing more pleasing to a traveller--or more terrible to travel writers, than a large rich plain; especially if it is without great rivers or bridges; and presents nothing to the eye but one unvaried picture of plenty: for after they have once told you that 'tis delicious! or delightful! (as the case happens)

³³ Ed. Herdan and Herdan, Lichtenberg's Commentaries; Promies, Vol. III, pp. 988-89.

³⁴ William Hogarth, The Analysis of Beauty (1753). Ed. Joseph Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 141.

--that the soil was grateful, and that nature pours out all her abundance, etc....they have then a large plain upon their hands, which they know not what to do with--and which is of little use to them but to carry them to some town; and that town, perhaps of little more, but a new place to start from to the next plain--and so on (VII. iliii.).

When Bonaventura confronts this dilemma, he projects it into eternity and is shattered by his inability to imagine how the human ego could endure a permanent equilibrium. His experience on earth has not furnished him with guidelines in this perplexity.

As epitomized by Tristram, Rasselas and Voltaire's *Candide*, mankind persists in regarding the plain of plenty merely as convenient departing point to reach ever new horizons. The problem which none of the enlightened thinkers could solve in purely rational and human terms becomes truly terrifying when measured against immortality, for Kreuzgang arrives at the distinctly disturbing conclusion, that only the perishable parts of man--those which he shares with the animals--can ever find perfect satisfaction. Without the stomach as constant instigator, man would regress into stupor and indolence. The thought is particularly developed in the digression "Apology for Life" (p. 183 ff.) which foresees

The mind without the stomach is like the bear who indolently sucks his own paw. He is but the treasurer of this sack suspended in him, and if

you cut it off him, then he is done for. (p. 185 and 187)³⁵

Tristram claims a similarly central position for the stomach in his cryptic, almost cynical remark which ends the Maria episode:

"What and excellent inn at Moulins!" (IX. xxiv.)

The satirical method in this exclamation, which feeds on the unexpected sudden connection between two quite unrelated subjects, is traced back to Rabelais by Melvyn New.³⁶ As Kreuzgang has set his horizons far beyond the next inn, the pleasantries of life cannot offer him any escape route, not even the temporary relief with which Tristram contents himself. To the nightwatchman the need for food, and the enjoyment it can provide, merely prove that the ego, when stripped of its animal nature, will have to face the terrifying ordeal for which the buried-alive nun serves as paradigm. What can the mind, left with

³⁵ Lichtenberg used the unusual simile of the bear and his paws at various times, so in B 223, where he notes: "People become scholars just as some become soldiers, because they have no aptitude for anything else; their right hand has to earn their bread and they can be said to lay down like the bears in winter and suck out of their paws." A list of suggestions which were entered at the start of Wastebook E includes "the sucking of their paws by bears to be used as analogy for writing books" (Leitzmann, Vol. 136, p. 364). See also Eccl. IV, 5: "The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh," and VI, 7: "All the labour of man is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not filled."

³⁶ New, p. 194.

nothing but its own resources, hope and achieve?
 "Will it be able to beguile time for itself? . . . "
 (p. 169). Such questions about the self cannot be
 answered from human experience.

When the Porter asks, after the young mother is
 immured, "do you hate mankind now?" Kreuzgang's reply
 may seem like an attempt at changing the subject. It
 indicates however, how totally he identifies with the
 fate of the condemned woman

'I am practically alone with myself'--I said--,
 'and hate or love just as little as possible! I
 attempt to think that I think nothing, and that
 way I finally manage to get so far as to arrive
 at myself!'. . . (p. 169).

The ellipsis is used with discretion, and indicates
 that both question and answer only touch on the
 problem which exceeds the considerable intellectual
 capabilities of the nightwatchman.

The word "nothing" looms large in this
 statement, as it does also in so many Sternian
 phrases. The religio-mythical connotations of the
 word are indicated by its synonymity with Solomon's
 "Vanity," and its use by the psalmists. Bonaventura
 and Sterne manipulate it with dexterity and exploit
 its ambiguities, which are highlighted in the
Nightwatches, because the last and final "Nothing" is
 not given as a straight reply to Kreuzgang's
 intellectual torment, but as the inconclusive call of

an echo, as if to re-inflrce the Locke-Kantean contention that the mind is unable to reach out beyond itself.

In the context of an argument on immortality, Sterne's "nothing" also is indeterminate. Tristram's elliptical discussion of the problem gives no clear indication whether his digression on souls (VII. xiv., xv.) merely ridicules the serious challenge which a common word which nearly everybody takes for granted presented to many eighteenth-century thinkers, or whether his burlesque is intended as a sincere contribution to the dialogue of ideas. The menippea with its open-ended, fragmentary approach, leaves room for more than one interpretation.

As usual, Tristram starts with a seemingly wildly unconnected thought: "I was under a vow not to shave my beard till I got to Paris;---yet I hate to make mysteries of nothing." But this immediately places "nothing" in the context of vow and mystery. He goes on to quote from Lessius (1554-1623), a Jesuit scholar, who claims that only one Dutch cubic mile would be needed to contain all the dammned souls from Adam to the end of the world.

Tristram's calculations that people since Adam, and with them presumably their souls, have grown smaller and smaller is based on a cabbalistic

tradition which Bonaventura also uses to satiric purpose when he reminds the young art worshipper in the "invalid's home of immortal gods" of his "puny stature." Kreuzgang explains: "Since the fall, before which Adam, as is well known, through the assurances of the rabbis measured his hundred yards, we have become noticeably smaller and are shrinking more and more from age to age" (p. 193).

With similar satiric logic Sterne concludes that in Lessius' time souls "were as little as can be imagined--- ---We find them less now--- And next winter we shall find them less again; so that if we go on from little to less, and from less to nothing, I hesitate not one moment to affirm, that in half a century, at this rate, we shall have no souls at all" (VII. xiv.).

Yorick the preacher cannot discuss this proposition with the florid ease and blithe abandon of Tristram the ironic person, who zigzags away from problems when they become too pressing, and may or may not approach them later from a quite different direction. A sermon on the "Abuses of Conscience" substitutes, however, conscience for souls and warns that though well working consciences are taken for granted, many people manage altogether without one and others, as David in the case of Uriah, with one

that is conveniently selective. In this sermon Sterne also provides the key to the anecdote of the Abbess of Andouillets and her hypocritical ilk:

The surest way to try the merit of any disputed notion,---is to trace down the consequences such a notion has produced, and compare them with the spirit of Christianity.³⁷

Lichtenberg secularized this precept, and many of his far-sighted predictions owe their origin to its rigorous application. Kreuzgang follows the same guideline when he demands an "explanation for every single substance," and "soars ever higher from natural science into theology" (p. 63). Like Sterne, he is also capable of drawing a quick line from any triviality, such as a shoe (p. 63), to the most challenging questions. In the light of Yorick's sermon, the "nothing" in Tristram's digression on souls becomes synonymous with "worthless, because inactive." Sterne and Bonaventura are, however, not content with final definitions. Their verbal virtuosity is constantly displayed by the many variations of meaning they are able to reveal.

Beside all these features, Lichtenberg and Bonaventura have also this in common with Sterne and his distinguished predecessors in English eighteenth-century satire; while they are steeped in rhetorical

³⁷ Sterne, Sermons, Vol. II, p. 116.

tradition, and their writings abound with literary allusions, and with references to the current and common concerns of their times, they have produced works of inspiring and exemplary originality.

CONCLUSION

Themes and techniques in the Nightwatches concur with Lichtenberg's literary criteria, as with his spheres of interest. But in the absence of all documentary proof, neither he--nor anybody else--can be acclaimed as undisputed author of the Nightwatches by Bonaventura. The writer of this remarkable text should, however, be recognized as the possessor of an exceptionally sharp intellect which was thoroughly steeped in rhetoric and the classical tradition; which focused on the concerns of the enlightenment, especially man's place in the universe; which was interested in, and familiar with all university disciplines, and the printing trade; which was conversant to an outstanding degree in literature, philosophy, and science, and in particular with their development in England. Like Lichtenberg and Ecclesiasticus, but unlike the romantics, Bonaventura did not dream of a Golden Age of long ago.¹ He was probing the limits of human knowledge in all

¹ Eccl. VII, 10: "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

directions, but wary enough of any possible progress to use satire as his preferred mode of expression.

In this genre he demonstrates a thorough familiarity with the English satirists of the eighteenth century, and he follows the tradition of Swift, Pope and the other Scriblerians, Fielding and Sterne. Like Lichtenberg, all these writers enjoyed the satires of Lucian, and Bakhtin might refer to any of their work when he says of this Greek master of the *menippea* that

the satires of Lucian, taken as a group, are an entire encyclopedia of his times: they are full of overt and hidden polemics with various philosophical, religious, ideological and scientific schools, and with the tendencies and currents of his time; they are full of the images of contemporary or recently deceased public figures, 'masters of thought' in all spheres of societal and ideological life (under their own names, or disguised); they feel out new directions in the development of everyday life; they show newly emerging types in all layers of society, and so on. They are a sort of Diary of a Writer, seeking to unravel and evaluate the general spirit and direction of evolving contemporary life.²

While this thesis concentrates on Bonaventura's exceptional familiarity with English language, culture and literature, and in particular with the *menippean* tradition which flowered in English satire during the eighteenth century, it must be stressed that there are other means by which Bonaventura's

² Bakhtin, Problems, p. 118.

dense text could be analysed, and that he was as familiar and concerned with life and conditions in his own country as with those in England.³

While most of his paradigms are chosen from sources which may now be considered rather obscure, and were so already in large measure to the romantics of the early nineteenth century, during the enlightenment the majority of them were so widely accessible as to be almost clichés. Never, though, did Bonaventura use any trope without revealing unexpected facets of these time-worn examples, or without illuminating their inherent meaning in new and unexpected ways.

The fleeting reference to Ugolino, for instance, needs footnoting now. Gerstenberg, however, begins a short introductory passage to his tragedy Ugolino by stating that the plot is too well known to demand any explanation, and Lessing starts his review of the play with exactly the same words. In England the episode was at the time so well known that Paget

³ E.g. Linde Katritzky, "Goethe in den 'Nachtwachen. Von Bonaventura' und in den Schriften Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs." Goethe-Jahrbuch (Weimar), 1987, pp. 157-168. Similar connections exist to many other German eighteenth-century writers, notably Lessing, Möser, Herder, Wieland, Klopstock and the writers of the Göttinger Hain, Tieck and the brothers Schlegel, Jean Paul, and the philosophers Kant and Fichte. There are also recurrent parallels to the mysticism of Jacob Böhme.

Toynbee sees it as "hackneyed" already in 1781. Frances A. Yates, who quotes this from Toynbee's Dante in English Literature (1909) remarks on "the curious fact that before any complete translation of Dante exists in English, there are already three verse and three prose renderings of the Ugolino episode, and a picture of the subject by one of the greatest of English artists. Dante seems to make his entry into eighteenth-century England in the form of Ugolino."⁴

Relying on this background of common knowledge, Bonaventura can omit the gruesome gothic details. His emphasis is not on the anguish and the pathetic plight of the suffering individual, experienced as a romantic hero "different from the society that has failed him." While Jack D. Zipes thus sees the romantic hero as "essentially an anticultural hero in that he represents the primacy of the individual over society,"⁵ Kreuzgang and even the Poor Poet, who in

⁴ Frances A. Yates, "Transformations of Dante's Ugolino," in Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. XIV (The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1951), p. 94. A verse translation of the episode by Edward Young was not published during the eighteenth century.

⁵ Jack D. Zipes, the great refusal. studies of the romantic hero in german and american literature (Bad Homburg: Athenäum, 1970), pp. 21 and 31.

some measure seems to conform to this romantic pattern, consistently stress the universality and general relevance of their attitudes.

When the Poor Poet therefore explains himself in his "Letter of Refusal to Life" (p. 133 and 135), by using allusions to Dante, he experiences his own fate not as exceptional but as representative and parabolic, and diverts the perspective away from himself onto the world at large:

they are letting me starve, like Ugolino in the greatest hunger tower, the world, the key for which they have cast before my very eyes into the sea forever.

The digressive letter is one of many inserted genres in the Nightwatches. These are, according to Bakhtin, "presented at various distances from the ultimate authorial position."⁶ It starts with a reversal of Franklin's epitaph, and shows from the beginning a shift of emphasis from the individual fate onto general conditions: "Man is good for nothing. Therefore I am striking him out. My Man has found no publisher, neither as persona vera nor ficta." Like "Ugolino turned blind from hunger" the poet is "conscious of his blindness." Like Empedocles he cannot bear it and prefers "to mount the battlements and hurl" himself "down."

⁶ Bakhtin, Problems, p.118.

The deed is neither commended nor condemned, for the menippea poses questions and exposes problems for which there are no answers. Use of the reversed epitaph suggests, however, that there are other solutions besides the one chosen by the poet. The position of Dante's Ugolino episode at the end of the Inferno (Canto XXXIII, 1-78) points, like other signifiers in the Nightwatches, to the expectation that life will continue after death, for Dante left Hell directly after encountering such extreme suffering to proceed to Purgatory and hence to Paradise. St. Bonaventura greets him there (Paradiso, Canto XII), the great mystic, who "holds a central and pivotal position" in the history of Western spirituality," whose masterpiece, Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Ewert Cousins as The Soul's Journey into God, though due to the ambivalent connotations of mens, mentis, he translates in his text " the terms mens as "soul" and as "mind" depending on the connotations of the context.⁷ Kreuzgang, who parallels this quest for meaning in life and continuance into eternity, pursues it, however, solely with the faculties of the mind. He has

⁷ Bonaventure, The Soul's Journey into God. The Tree of Life. The Life of St. Francis. Transl. and intr. Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), Introduction, pp. 1 and 20-21.

therefore to dispense with the religious dimension in his reasoning, but he points to it continuously, nevertheless, through various associations, not least by presenting his ventures under the pseudonym Bonaventura.

Among various asides which tie in with this interpretation is a seemingly casual remark at the end of praise for "tragic jest and such fools as in King Lear," when Kreuzgang in one of his many metaphors from stage and literature condemns "good-natured composers of comedies" for writing

as if life were the highest thing and not rather man, who goes further than life, which makes up merely the first act and the inferno in the Divine Comedy through which, in order to seek his ideal, he is travelling . . . [sic] (p. 67)

Ugolino thus represents Man--his helpless suffering, his restrictive confinement, his raging intellectual hunger and his blindness, his utter inability to look beyond the walls of his dark and narrow dungeon. He also epitomizes the extremity of hell beyond which there is hope for redemption in the sense of Dante, and also of Jacob Böhme who experiences the darkest hour as the beginning of morn.⁸

⁸ This is the leading idea in Jacob Böhme's Aurora; Kreuzgang refers to it in the First Nightwatch when he censures the zealous priest who "paints the beyond in audacious pictures; not, however, the beautiful aurora of the new day and the

By assuming that every component of the composition carries emblematic significance, and is part of an interconnecting orchestration, we can approach the Nightwatches through any detail in the text and find a multilayered structure that reaches beyond literal meaning into allegorical, symbolical and mystical/spiritual levels.

Lichtenberg applied this intensively interpretative method to his Hogarth Commentaries, adapting his explications to the sophisticated emblematic methods of the comic-serious and satiric genres of the enlightenment, which parabolized general truth in individual incident, and therefore habitually worked with multi-meaningful implications.⁹

When the Nightwatches are placed and analyzed within this generic framework, they will be viewed as a tightly structured text in which each detail is deliberately manipulated to demonstrate the confusion and limitations of life, the closeness of sanity and insanity, and the inconclusiveness of even the most

budding arbours and angles" (p. 33).

⁹ The technique is epitomized by a remark to Plate III of The Harlot's Progress: "Here furniture has to explain personalities." Promies III, p. 758.

advanced and profound human arguments.¹⁰ The reader is left with unanswered and, if Kant can be trusted, unanswerable ultimate questions, to which he should ideally react with his own responses, for if he expects to be redeemed in the mystico-religious sense of Böhme, he must be prepared to take his own cross willingly upon himself.

That Kreuzgang has done so is shown by his name. It means calvary, the walk towards suffering and death. Willful substitution of this variant for his original name, Kreuzweg, signifies acceptance of Böhme's mystical commitment. Both names are ambivalent, and like the nightwatchman's allegorical genealogy expressive of the complex paradoxes in human nature. Kreuzgang stands also for cloister, a place of spiritual rest and contemplation. Kreuzweg, crossroad, is a position where everything converges and departs. In this sense it is used by Sophocles, when Oedipus meets his fate and kills his father at a crossroad. In folklore, it is also the meeting place

¹⁰ Eccl., e.g. II, 19: "And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity."

of spirits, both benevolent and--more commonly--evil.¹¹

Rudolf Haym's evaluation of the Nightwatches as one of the most fascinating works of the romantic epoch illustrates that Bonaventura's work still exerts its challenge, but that profound changes in perception, intention, and motivation took place when the age of enlightenment turned into the romantic epoch. Words began to communicate different intentions; satiric critique of prevailing conditions was swept aside by vehemently expressed hopes for an idealized future, and the artist transformed himself from a didactic mentor with the ambition to instruct while he entertained, into a creative prodigy overflowing with innate genius, superior to the rest of mankind, and set apart from it.

That the Nightwatches allow varied interpretations and respond to approaches from successive epochs in different ways is a measure of their author's exceptional intellect and brilliance. He achieved the depth and sparkle of his imagery by overlaying his images with all the available thoughts and comments of important previous thinkers, then

¹¹ Bächtold-Stäubli, Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens.

fusing them in Lichtenberg's manner under the intense heat of his own scrutiny.

He succeeded in explaining the difficult and profound in easily accessible parabolic metaphors, and by infusing the commonplaces of his time with startling significance, though his intense economy of style and metaphor acts frequently as an initial impediment to understanding. As long as the problems of man's ultimate destination remain unresolved, and the Tragedy: Man--the selfish mis-use of man's mental gifts--is still performed on the great stage of this world, the ideas which he communicated to posterity are worthy of serious consideration. They deserve also a prominent place in the history of ideas, as a window into a former age, and as witness to one of the most important literary and philosophical movements in modern Western thought, the ongoing and mutually invigorating exchange between England and Germany.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A. J. Dietlinde Katritzky was born as the daughter of Dr. Friedrich Kilian and Renate, née Vocke, in Ansbach, Germany, in 1928. She attended schools in Obernburg am Main (1934-38), Aschaffenburg am Main (1938), and Munich (1939-47), and studied at the University of Munich from 1947-1952. She interrupted her studies in 1950 to visit England where she obtained the Cambridge Efficiency Diploma in English. After the Staatsexamen in History, English and German, she married in 1952 Alan R. Katritzky, then a research student in chemistry in Oxford, England, and since August 1980 Kenan Professor of Chemistry at the University of Florida. They lived in Oxford, Cambridge and Norwich (England) where they raised four children.

In August 1982 she became a full time teaching assistant and graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Florida, where she was offered a visiting lecturership in 1985, after obtaining the degree of Master of Arts in 1984.

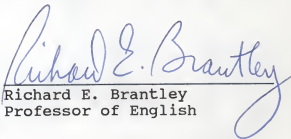
In August 1984 she was accepted as a graduate student by the Department of English at the University of Florida and entered the fascinating world of English eighteenth-century enlightenment and satire with a course by Dr. Brian R. McCrea.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Brian R. McCrea, Chairman
Associate Professor of
English

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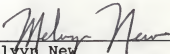
Richard E. Brantley
Professor of English

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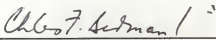
Alistair M. Duckworth
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Melvyn New
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Charles F. Sidman
Professor of History

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 1988

Dean, Graduate School

